CONTRIBUTION OF THE JĪYARS OF ŚRĪ AHOBILA MAṬHA TO ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVA PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

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Preface

The Ahobila Maṭha is a Śrīvaiṣṇava centre of great fame and antiquity. It will be 600 years old in 1998. It derives the greatness from the presiding deity of the Maṭha, Śrī Mālola Nṛsiṁha, one of the nine Narasiṁhas atop the Ahobilam Hill, forming part of the Nallamalai ranges of Kurnool District in Andhra Pradesh. It is one of the 108 *divyadeśas*, sacred to Śrīvaiṣṇavas. The Āḻvārs have sung the glory of this holy place in their *Divyaprabandha*. The place has gained sancity, because according to the scriptures (*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*) this is the very place where Lord Narasiṁha manifested himself and killed the demon King Hiraṇyakaśipu.

During the six centuries of its existence, since its inception in 1398 A.D. when Kiḍāmbi Śrīnivāsācārya of Tirunārāyaṇapuram, a young man hardly twenty years of age, was inspired by Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha to renounce the world for propagating *Rāmānuja Darśana* to the present day, the Ahobila Maṭha has been headed by eminent scholars, inspired poets, intrepid builders and noted dramatists. The present pontifical head Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika is 45th in the line. Carrying the mantle of his forbears in propagating the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy handed down by the God-intoxicated *Āḻvārs* and the benign *Ācāryas*, His Holiness demonstrates how spirituality and

monasticism can be effectively practised in a secular society. The propagation of *Rāmānuja Darśana* must go hand in hand with projecting the *arcā* worship of the Lord and the other great *Ācāryas* for encompassing the devotees into its fold. It is in this background that the contribution of the Jīyars of the Ahobila Maṭha gains in significance and has been chosen as the subject of the present Ph.D. programme.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introductory in nature and deals with Śrīvaiṣṇavism as a religion and the basic tenets of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy - the inseparability of Śrī and Viṣṇu, the indispensability of an Ācārya for human redemption who acts as a mediator between the suffering soul and the compassionate Lord and the greatness and glory of *Prapatti Yoga* superseding *Karma, Jñāna* and *Bhakti Yogas.* The Vaḍakalai (Northern sect of Śrīvaiṣṇavism) *ācārya paramparā* originating from Lord Nārāyaṇa upto Śrīmad Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika, founder Jīyar of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha is also given in this chapter.

In the second chapter the Saṁnyāsa tradition is taken up for study. The duties enjoined in the *saṁnyāsa āśrama* according to Yādavaprakāśa's *Yatidharmasamuccaya* and the *Yatiliṅgasamarthana* of Śrī Vātsya Varadācārya have been presented. The Śrīvaiṣṇava ascetics fall into four groups - *kuṭīcaka,*

bahūdaka, *haṁsa* and *paramahaṁsa*- each latter one being superior to the previous one. The *yajñopavīta*, *tridaṇḍa*, *śikhā*, *pātra* and *kaupīna* are the five essential things which a Śrīvaiṣṇava ascetic should always possess. He has to perform the annual *cāturmāsya vrata*, starting with the *saṅkalpa* on the *āṣāḍha pūrṇimā* day, which is termed as *saṅkalpa mahotsava*.

The third chapter is biographical in nature, dealing with the lives of the Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha, their sojourns to the holy shrines, some of which were inaccessible, traversing the length and breadth of India even in days of yore when there were no proper means of transport, their expositions of the *grantha catuṣṭaya*, construction of temples, digging of tanks, establishment of *agrahāras*, installation of the idols of *pūrvācāryas* in temples, the construction of Bṛndāvanas for them and establishment of Vedapāṭhaśālās. Of special significance in recent times, is the construction of the 13-tiered *Rājagopuram* at Śrīraṅgam costing 15 million rupees, by the 44th Jīyar, when he was 89 years old. This is the tallest tower in Asia, 165 ft. in length and 150 ft. in breadth and rising upto 226 ft. in height. The present 45th Jīyar is carrying on this holy tradition by expanding the activities of Maṭha, making the forest shrines of Ahobilam accessible to all by laying roads, providing rest houses and renovating the tanks and temples at Ahobilam and providing the pleasure of having *darśana* of the *mūla* and *utsava*

idols of Mālola Nṛsiṁha in unison at Ahobilam, which had not taken place for many bygone years.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the study of the compositions of the Jīyars. These can be broadly classified into philosophical, religious and literary works though there is an undercurrent of an admixture of philosophy, religion and literature in all their works. It should be mentioned here that not all the Jīyars have contributed in this direction. The works are selected on the basis of their literary and philosophical importance. Smaller *stotras* like *daśakas*, *aṣṭottara-śatas* and *maṅgalāśāsanas* are not taken into consideration. Some of the works are highly scholarly disputations, some are elucidatory of important concepts like *Puruṣakāra* and *Rahasyas*, while some others are commentarial, expounding basic texts like the *Śrībhāṣya* and *Gītārthasaṅgraha*. As many as 25 works of the Pontiffs have been studied in this chapter. Some of the works are in the form of palm-leaf / paper manuscripts while a majority of them is available in print. The fact that the Pontiffs could find time to compose excellent treatises inspite of their busy schedule of ritual worship of the presiding deity Śrī Mālola Nṛsiṁha, temple renovations, periodical tours and so on, makes the study all the more inspiring and interesting.

The Jīyar of Iñjimeḍu, Śrīraṅga Śaṭhakopa, the 42nd Pontiff has also left his mark in the annals of the Maṭha by establishing Vedapāṭhaśālā, Prabhandha

pāṭhaśālā, a Sanskrit College at Madurāntakam, bringing out the monthly Publication of the Maṭha, *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*, and conducting the annual Mālola Vidvatsadas where scholars in Vedānta were called upon to air their views. This is a tradition that is still continuing to the present day and is eagerly looked forward to, by the devout Public. The present Jīyar has written a Tamil commentary on the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. In addition, His Holiness has edited the *Śrīvaiṣṇava-Sadācāra-Nirṇaya* of Śrī Raṅganātha Yatīndra, the 26th pontiff, and the *Prapannajayantī-niṛnaya* of the 27th Jīyar, Śrī Vīrarāghava Yatīndra Mahādeśika. He is also the editor of the *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā* wherein his editorial is read with avid interest by layman and scholar alike.

In conclusion, the fifth chapter estimates and sums up the mighty work of the holy saints who are spreading the message of Rāmānuja, carrying the idol of Lord Mālola in their tours for the sake of rejuvenating the masses, performing *pañcasaṁskāras* and *bharanyāsa* to the devotees, encompassing them into the Śrīvaiṣṇava fold and spreading the messages of unity and synthesis not only in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community but among those belonging to other faiths. The Jīyars not only transmit the traditional truths through such activities as publishing *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā* in different languages to cater to the needs of the people living in different states, and by giving lectures/discourses, and guiding and encouraging

scholarly assemblies, but also by training the young and devout disciples in the traditional lore and grooming them to be future *ācāryas* and authentic interpreters of the glorious *siddhānta* of Śrī Rāmānuja. By leading an ascetic life and expounding simple truths, they lend a new meaning to life and offer solutions for the suffering humanity and thus exude an air of harmony and peace wherever they go.

It is now my pleasant duty to acknowledge gratefully the help and cooperation I received directly and indirectly from individuals and institutions in preparing this thesis. At the outset I must express my thanks to the authorities of the University of Madras for giving me the permission to register myself as a Ph.D. research scholar with the Department of Vaishnavism in January 1992. I am also grateful to them for granting me the University Research Fellowship from January 1995 till date.

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Last but not the least, I wish to record my respectful homage to His Holiness the 45th Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha, who in his *pūrvāśrama*, blessed me and suggested this subject for my research work.

K. Anuradha

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled CONTRIBUTION OF THE JĪYARS OF ŚRĪ AHOBILA MAṬHA TO ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVA PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION submitted by Mrs. K. ANURADHA is a record of research work done by the candidate during the period of study under me (January 1992 to January 1997) and that the thesis has not formed the basis of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles. The thesis represents independent work on the part of the candidate prepared under my general supervision.

Dr. Narasimhachary

SUPERVISOR

INTRODUCTION

Śrīvaiṣṇavism

> The diversity of India is tremendous; it is obvious; it lies on the surface and anybody can see it ... But disruptive tendencies gave rise immediately to an attempt to find a synthesis. Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside ... It was something deeper and within its fold, the widest tolerance of beliefs and customs was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.[1]

This extract from the letter written by Jawaharlal Nehru during his confinement in Ahmednagar Fort in 1940 s, epitomizes the greatness of Bhāratavarṣa, deriving its strength from the unison of variegated cultures and lending it a special charm and uniqueness in the panorama of world thought. This strain of unity in diversity is the life-blood of Hinduism in general and Śrīvaiṣṇavism in particular. A detailed study of Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophy will reveal that it is this special characteristic that places Śrivaiṣṇava system of religious philosophy, head and shoulders above any other system of thought. This fusion without division of apparently diverse elements is the very foundation of Śrī Rāmānuja Darśana i.e. the philosophy expounded by the great Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācārya, Śrī Rāmānuja.

1 Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 61-62, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1961.

The Śrīvaiṣṇava system of thought primarily implies the inseparability of Śrī and Viṣṇu. According to this system, Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Being and He constitutes the Godhead, along with His divine consort Goddess Lakṣmī - "the Śrī *par excellence*". Retaining their individual characteristics they supplement and complement each other in their *līlā* –

अखिलभुवनजन्मस्थेमभङ्गादिलीले[1]

It is rather interesting to note that the term Viśiṣṭādvaita came to be applied to this system only after Rāmānuja (1017-1137 A.D.). In fact, Rāmānuja has used the word "*Viśiṣṭadrvyaikya*". It was Sudarśanasūri (early part of 13th century) author of the celebrated commentary, the *Śrutaprakāśikā* on Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya* (a commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahmasūtras*) who used "Viśiṣṭādvaita" for the first time.[2] The term literally means "Qualified Non-dualism". It is in fact the Doctrine special of Pan-organismal Monotheism. Śrī Vedāntadeśika (i.e. Veṅkaṭanātha 1268-1369 A.D.) the illustrious follower of Rāmānuja explains this term in his *Nyāyasiddhāñjana* thus:

अशेष-चिद्-अचित्-प्रकारं ब्रह्म एकमेव तत्त्वम्। तत्र प्रकार-प्रकारिणोः प्रकाराणाञ्च मिथः अत्यन्तभेदेऽपि विशिष्ट-ऐक्यादिविवक्षया एकत्वव्यपदेशः।[3]

1 Benedictory verse of the *Śrībhāṣya*.

2 V. Varadachari, "Antiquity of the term Viśiṣṭādvaita" in *Viśiṣṭādvaita* by 24 Erudite Scholars, Ramanuja Vedanta Society, Madras, 1976.

3 part I, appendix, p.1.

The Supreme Being (Brahman) is only One (Advaita). But It has all the animate and inanimate objects (*cit* and *acit*) as Its attributes. Though there is thus mutual difference between the modes and the possessor (Brahman) and between the modes themselves, the whole thing is conceived of as a complex three-in-one single unit. This concept that the entire world of men and matter form the body of the one and only supreme Brahman is the basis of Visiṣṭādvaita philosophy. Compare the words of the English poet, Alexander Pope:

> All are but parts of one stupendous whole
> Whose body Nature is, and God, the soul.[1]

So, philosophical knowledge consists in clearly understanding the nature of the three entities, *cit*, *acit*, and *Īśvara*, their distinctness from and also their relation to one another. These constitute the *tattvatraya* or the three Realities of Viśiṣṭādvaita. The knowledge of these entities is only a preliminary requisite to leading a life in such a way that the main purpose, specially of human life (*viz.* liberation from the cycle of birth and death), is achieved. The description of the means for achieving this end is termed as *hita* (*viz.- jñāna*, *karma*, *bhakti* and *prapatti*). The final goal "the consummation devoutly to be wished",[2] namely *mokṣa* is *paramapuruṣārtha*.

1 'An Essay on Man', *Epistles*, *ll.* 267-268 .

2 William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, *Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark*, Act. III - Sc. I, p. 1047, English Language Book Society and Collins, London and Glasgow, 1964.

As a religion, Śrīvaiṣṇavism is as simple as following certain basic tenets laid down in the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* as –

सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर, स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः।[1]

etc; and, as a philosophy, Viśiṣṭādvaita is as complex and capable of generating a wide variety of prismatic interpretations as is evident from the very first aphorism of the *Brahma-sūtras*, *athāto brahmajijñāsā*. But the speciality of this Viśiṣṭādvaitic Śrīvaiṣṇavism lies in the stress laid on *bhakti* or loving devotion to the Lord and *prapatti* or the doctrine of voluntary self-surrender to the Lord's Will realising fully well that —

दासभूताः स्वतः सर्वे ह्यात्मानः परमात्मनः।[2]

(All selves, by nature, are subservient to the Lord)

The body is bestowed upon man (*dattam śarīram*) by God, out of His immense compasssion (*paramakāruṇya*) so that man may reach God in the end. This body in fact is a boat (*plava*), a means for crossing the ocean of worldly life (*saṁsārasāgara-nistaraṇa*). The goal *viz. sāyujyapadavī* is distant, and the means strenuous - through exercise (*abhyāsa*) and detachment (*vairāgya*). The individual has *dattasvātantrya i.e.* independence bestowed on him to choose the right way leading to God. The yearning to reach God may germinate in a man in one life or a series of lives. By his own misdeeds he

1 *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, I. 19

2 *Śrī Mantrarājapadastotra*, 11.

has fallen into the mire of *saṁsāra*, full of sorrows and suffering, and these act as catalysts, quickening man's desire for liberation, and thus he becomes a *mumukṣu*. The very extent of the painfulness of man's life is a pointer to the triumph that is to come in *paraloka i.e.* Vaikuṇṭha. As the Lord Himself declares: -

यस्यानुग्रहमिच्छामि धनं तस्य हराम्यहम्।
बान्धवैश्च वियोगेन भृशं भवति दुःखितः ॥
तेन दुःखेन सन्तप्तो यदि मां न परित्यजेत् ।
तं प्रसादं करिष्यामि यत्सुरैरपि दुर्लभम् ॥[1]

"Whomsoever I wish to make the recipient of My grace, I deprive him of his wealth and wean him away from his near and dear ones. If even in this sorrowful state, he does not abandon me, I will shower on him such a grace that even the gods would envy."

The operation of God's grace to a *mumukṣu* who through his devotion surrenders to the Lord's Will helplessly and with *mahāviśvāsa* through a spiritual *guru*, is inevitable. As is well known, *aprārthito na gopāyet*[2] ("protect not unless prayed for").

1 *Bhāgavatapurāṇa / Varāhapurāṇa*. See *Śrīmad Rahasyatrayasāra*, p. 293, fn. 2, Pub. Śrī Deśika Sadanam, Madras, 1986.

2 *Lakṣmī Tantra* (17-72). Compare Christ's words: "Ask and it shall be given; knock and the doors shall be opened".

In Śrīvaiṣṇavism the role of a spiritual *guru* or *ācārya* as a mediator between the suffering soul and the compassionate Lord is extremely important for man's redemption.

पापिष्ठः क्षत्रबन्धुश्च पुण्डरीकश्च पुण्यकृत् ।
आचार्यवत्तया मुक्तौ तस्मादाचार्यवान् भवेत् ॥[1]

In fact the Ācārya is equated to the Lord in status —

यथा देवे तथा गुरौ।[2] देवमिवाचार्यमुपासीत।[3]

Madhurakavi Āḻvār states ten points[4] of similarity between the Ācārya and the Lord. Hence it is evident that before one obtains Bhagavatsambandha, Ācāryasambandha is an absolute necessity. An Ācārya is one who grants *sadvidyā* and is *ajñānadhvāntarodhaka.* Compare the *Śrutivākya* –

"आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद"[5]

So *ācāryavattā* is *mokṣa-kāraṇa* or better still, *mokṣa-sādhana.* For a *mumukṣu* it is essential to observe the Guruparamparā up to the Lord. It is "*Ābhagavattaḥ*" *i.e.*, originating from the Lord and not barring the Divine ones. According to the *Śrutivākya* –

"स चाऽऽचार्यवंशो ज्ञेयोऽसावसाविति आभगवत्तः"[6]

1 *Śrīmad Rahasyatrayasāram, Śrī Guruparamparāsāram*, p. 5.
2 Cf. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, VI. 23
3 Cf. *Āpastambasūtra*, 1-6-13.
4 Vide *Śrī Guruparamparāsāram*, p. 4.
5 Vide Appendix to *Śrīmad Rahasyatrayasāram*, p. 3.
6 Ibid. p.3.

"*Asau Asau*" refers to a distant object ultimately denoting Brahman. "*Asau Asau*" also means that each and every Ācārya's Holy Name (*Tiru Nāma*) should be recited separately and hence this practice of reciting the *taniyans* (dedicatory stanzas) of Ācāryas individually. Teachers of right mind are described as those who are free from egotism (*nirahaṅkārī*), desiring others' welfare (*parasamṛddhipriyaḥ*), not attracted by love of fame or wealth (*khyātilābhanirapekṣa*). The compassionate *guru* leads the suffering soul to the Lord taking upon himself the burden of sin invested by the *mumukṣu* as *nyāsa*. This is *bharanyāsa* or *bharasamarpaṇa*.

In the Śrīvaiṣṇava *sampradāya* the first *guru* is Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself–

तमिमं सर्वसंपन्नमाचार्यं पितरं गुरुम्।[1] अखिललोकानां
गुरुर्नारायणो गुरुः।[2] गुरुरसि गतिश्चासि जगताम्।[3]
शिष्यायिताः शरणयन्ति मुमुक्षवस्त्वाम्
आद्यं गुरुं गुरुपरम्परयाधिगम्यम्॥[4]

Next only to Lord Nārāyaṇa and out of Her own will comes Śrī (personification of *dayā*) tempering the Lord's justice through Her divine mercy. This aspect of forgiveness and compassion lends a new dimension to Śrīvaiṣṇava religion as it were. It is a religion of hope, positive in its

1 *Mahābhārata* : Sabhāparvan, 41-2,3.

2 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* : 5-3-14.

3 Yāmuna's *Stotraratna*, 60.

4 Vedāntadeśika's *Śaraṇāgatidīpikā*, 9.

approach and promising redemption to the repentant erring humanity. This may be compared with the following extract: [1]

> The quality of mercy is not strained;
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
> The throned monarch better than his crown,
> His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
> The attribute to awe and majesty,
> Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of things.
> But mercy is above this sceptred sway.
> It is enthroned in the heart of kings.
> It is an attribute to God Himself
> And earthly power doth then show liketh God's
> When mercy seasons justice.

Śrī is the divine Mediator called *puruṣakāra* and is co-eternal with and inseparable from the Lord (*apṛthaksiddha*) pleading for love and forgiveness. So justice and mercy are eternally blended in Him – in the Godhead Śrīman Nārāyaṇa.

Next in line comes Viṣvaksena. He is the controller of *Vaikuṇṭha* or *Paramapada*. According to tradition, he taught Nammāḻvār or Śaṭhakopa the philosophy of Śrīvaiṣṇava system.

1 The famous words of Portia in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, wherein this quality of 'mercy' is extolled to heavenly heights (Act IV, Sc. 1), p. 246.

With this we enter a new movement called the Āḻvār movement which was to have a lasting influence in the growth of Śrīvaiṣṇavism especially in South India. The great feature of the Āḻvār movement was that it was more emotional than metaphysical. "Āḻvār" in Tamil means "one who is immersed". These saints were so called because they were always immersed in their love and devotion to Lord Viṣṇu. The Āḻvārs were uncompromsing in their love for and worship of Viṣṇu. The hymns of the Āḻvārs were the outbursts of God-filled souls for whom God was an intimate personal friend and guide.

The *Nālāyira-divyaprabandham* is the name by which the hymns of all the Āḻvārs came to be collectively called. The Āḻvārs were twelve in number and include a woman, the celebrated Godā or Āṇḍāḷ, to whom a magnificent temple was built in later years at Śrīvilliputtūr, her birth place.

Here, we can contain ourselves to mentioning about Nammāḻvār, the greatest of Śrīvaiṣṇava saints known by different names as Māṟan, Parāṅkuśa, Śaṭhakopa, Vakuḷābharaṇa and so on. He gave to the world four grand hymns – the *Tiruviruttam*, the *Tiruvāśiriyam*, the *Periya Tiruvantādi*, and the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. The Śrīvaiṣṇavas call them the four *Vedas* in Tamil garb, and Vedāntadeśika refers to the *Tirvāymoḻi* as the *Dramiḍopaniṣad*. Nammāḻvār's hymns have shaped the conduct and faith of the Vaiṣṇavas of South India. To the emotionally inclined these are simple appealing prayers to the different

local *arcā-avatāras* of Lord Viṣṇu. To the less emotional and more philosophical, they seem to be the outcome of great learning in the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Gītā* etc. To the practical spiritualist, they are of value as the achievement of one who was in holy communion with God. Nammāḻvār is called the "progenitor of the surrendered souls" (*prapannajana santāna kūṭastha*) by later Ācāryas of Viśiṣṭādvaita, and the fundamental doctrines of the Śrīvaiṣṇava faith, as current today, were taught by him.

After the age of the Āḻvārs (850 A.D) we enter into a new epoch in the history of Śrīvaiṣṇavism - the age of Ācāryas. The Ācāryas expounded their system of thought based on the hymns of Āḻvārs and the ancient Sanskrit scriptures. Their object was to reconcile the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā* with the Tamil *Prabandhams*. In fact they aimed at interpreting the latter in terms of the former. In appreciation, posterity has conferred on them (the Ācāryas), the significant title of *Ubhaya Vedāntins*. They regarded the *Prabandham* as equally authoritative as the *Vedas* and introduced them in public and private worship. They widened the scope of spiritual studies so as to include Tamil scriptures. Further they elaborated and perfected the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of thought with the aid of the Doctrine of Self-surrender which they derived from the Āḻvārs. The Ācāryas were very orthodox, well-versed in Sanskrit and Tamil. They passed through the different stages of orthodoxy and discharged their *nitya* (daily) and *naimittika* (occasional) duties expected of an

individual (even as the Lord Himself did in His *avatāras*) so that they may serve as standing examples to their followers. All the Śrīvaiṣṇava festivals, observances, fasts, vows and customs can be traced to the rules laid down by the Ācāryas. They were thus the makers of modern Śrīvaiṣṇavism – its society, rituals, practices and ideals. It is not therefore surprising that they, in turn, have become objects of worship and have been raised to equality with the Āḻvārs whom they themselves worshipped.

The first in this line was Nāthamuni or Śrī Raṅganātha Muni. A versatile scholar in *Vedas* and *Smṛtis*, he was a *Paramaikāntin* who enjoyed the *arcā-avatāra* of the Lord. He divided the *Prabandhams* into four parts of 1000 verses each, classified them according to different metres and introduced them to be sung in various Śrīvaiṣṇava shrines including the Śrīraṅgam temple. The installation of the images of Āḻvārs in temples and the conduct of the recitation of the *Vedas* and the *Prabandhams* alike, soon spread throughout the Śrīvaiṣṇava world.

The elevation of Tamil works to the status of the *Vedas* in the temple festivals in turn gave rise to a new and extensive type of religious literature in South India, an excellent admixture of Sanskrit and Tamil, the unique Maṇipravāḻa. In this intermingling of two different languages there is unity in diversity, each language retaining its individual identity and yet united in a new and appealing medium. Its main object was to expound the Tamil *Vedas*

and reconcile their teachings with those of the *Prasthānatraya*. Thus the Tamil *Prabandham* became an essential part of Śrīvaiṣṇava literature. This in turn gave rise to numerous commentaries on *Prabandhams* requiring the authority of a great scholar to interpret them in the light of *Śrutis* and *Smṛtis*. This necessity, along with the need to expound and defend the Viśiṣṭādvaita system against rival schools of Śaṅkara, Madhva, and Buddha led to the establishment of the post of Ācārya "whose authority was law in religious worship and whose advice was the final word in temples and household alike." In the early Śrīvaiṣṇava period, this pontifical head was usually entrusted with the management of the Śrīraṅgam temple. The early Ācāryas were successful in their great task because of the power they wielded over the important Śrīvaiṣṇava shrines of South India. But when this combination of offices ceased, Śrīvaiṣṇavism began to be divided into sects.[1]

It was but natural that when the dignity of the pontiff was established, the choice should fall on Nāthamuni and when he was formally appointed as the religious and administarative head in Śrīraṅgam temple, the whole Vaiṣṇava community paid homage to him. With him commenced a new era of activity and expansion in Śrīvaiṣṇavism. A great scholar and thinker, he composed two well-known works, the *Yogarahasya* and *Nyāyatattva*. None of

1 V. Rangacharya, "Historical Evolution of Śrīvaiṣṇavism in South India", *Cultural Heritage of India*, IV, p172, Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, 1969.

these works is available now, though quotations from the latter are made by Vedāntadeśika "the most brilliant luminary in the history of the post-Rāmānuja Śrīvaiṣṇavism".[1] From the references made to the *Nyāyatattva*, it appears to have been the first work in the field to interpret *Nyāya* according to the Śrīvaiṣṇava line of thought. It criticises and controverts the *Nyāyasūtras* of Gautama. Vedāntadeśika quotes several metrical and prose passages from it in his *Nyāyasiddhāñjana* and *Nyāyapariśuddhi*. The system of Viśiṣṭadvaita, as Vedāntadeśika observes in his *Tattvamuktākalāpa*, owes its origin to Nāthamuni and was developed and nurtured by Yāmuna his grandson, and protected and kept on a firm footing by Rāmānuja .

नायोपज्ञं प्रवृत्तं बहुभिरुपचितं यामुनेयप्रबन्धैः
त्रातं सम्यग्यतीन्द्रैरिदमखिलतमःकर्शनं दर्शनं नः ॥[2]

Puṇḍarīkākṣa and Śrīrāmamiśra, the succeeding *ācāryas*, are not known to have composed any works, although some Taniyans (Tamil verses) are attributed to them. Then, in the Ācārya line, comes the illustrious grandson of Nāthamuni,Yāmunācārya, also known as Āḷavaṇdār, meaning, 'one who has come to rule the spiritual world'. His compositions include (a) the *Catuśśloki*, which in four verses epitomises the position of Śrī as the consort of Lord Viṣṇu and the role played by Her in the salvation of the soul,

1 M. Narasimhachary, *Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita*, p.6, Prof. M. Rangacharya Memorial Trust, Madras, 1971.
2 V. 136.

(b) the *Stotraratna* which in sixtyfive verses praises Lakṣmīpati (Lord Viṣṇu), hints at the secret doctrine of self-surrender and highlights the *ācāryabhakti* of the author, (c) the *Gītārthasaṅgraha* which in thirty-two verses expounds in brief, the traditional teachings of the *Gītā*, (d) the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* which establishes the authority of the Pāñcarātra texts, (e) the *Siddhitraya* (*Ātma-*, *Īśvara-*, *Saṁvit- siddhis*) which depicts the nature of the individual soul and the superme Lord and their relation to each other. In the last section he refutes the doctrine of *avidyā* and Monism of Śaṅkara, (f) the *Mahāpuruṣanirṇaya* which is not available now, establishes the supremacy of Lord Nārāyaṇa over other deities on the strength of various authoritative texts (mainly the *Upaniṣads*) reinforced by reasonings.[1]

It was given to Yāmuna only to lay down the fundamentals of Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy and not to compose explanatory treatise (*bhāṣya*) on the *Vedāntasūtras* as Śaṅkara had done for Advaita. That task was achieved by Rāmānuja, said to have been named so by his maternal uncle who expected him to equal the great Lakṣmaṇa in his devotion to the Lord. Rāmānuja's father was a disciple of Śrīśailapūrṇa, his brother-in-law, Yāmuna's grandson and disciple who is said to have obtained from the Lord Himself the title of Tātācārya.[2] The traditional date of Rāmānuja's birth is 1017 A.D. and he is

1 M. Narasimhachary, *Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita*, pp. 13-15.

2 Vide V. Rangacharya, op.cit, p. 174.

said to have lived for 120 years. Yāmuna died before Rāmānuja became an Ācārya, and the interval was filled up by two scholars, Mahāpūrṇa and Śrīśailapūrṇa.

Rāmānuja inherited three great tasks from his *guru*, Yāmuna - (i) the perpetuation of the memory of Parāśara (the author of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*), (ii) the immortalisation of the glory of Nammāḻvār and (iii) the interpretation of Vyāsa's *Brahmasūtras* according to the Viśiṣṭādvaita system. During his long life-span Rāmānuja more than carried out these injunctions. He learnt Vedānta from Tirukkoṭṭiyūr Nambi, *Tiruvāymoḻi* from Tiruvaraṅga Perumāḻ Araiyar (Āḻavandār's son) and Tirumālai Āṇḍān; and *Rāmāyaṇa* from Periya Tirumalai Nambi. He is further said to have gone as far as Kashmir to see the *Vṛtti* or commentary of Bodhāyana which, according to tradition, interpreted the *Brahmasūtras* in the Viśiṣṭādvaita mode. These preparations being over, Rāmānuja gave the world in succession, several works which made him the foremost among the Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophers. One of his early works was the *Vedārthasaṅgraha* which deals in an elaborate manner with the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. Rāmānuja attacks the Advaita interpretation of the *mahāvākya* "*Tattvamasi*", Śaṅkara's Māyāvāda and the Bhedābheda doctrines of Bhāskara and Yādavaprakāśa. He then reconciles the Vedic passages with one another and formulates Viśiṣṭādvaita. In the concluding section he proves beyond doubt that the supreme Deity is to be called Nārāyaṇa and not by any other name known to the *Upaniṣads*. His *Vedāntadīpa* and *Vedāntasāra* are

comparatively shorter commentaries on the *Brahmasūtras*. His *Gadyatraya* comprising *Śaraṇāgati-*, *Śrīraṅga-* and *Vaikuṇṭha- gadyas* explains the concept of whole-hearted surrender called *Śaraṇāgati* in this system, the glory of Lord Raṅganātha of Śrīraṅgam and the highest abode of the Lord (*Śrīvaikuṇṭha*). In his *Nityagrantha*, Rāmānuja explains the daily routine to be observed by a Śrīvaiṣṇava. His *Gītābhāṣya*, as the name suggests, is a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* . He has bedecked the literary-cum-philosophical world with his *Navaratna* of which his *magnum opus* the *Śrībhāṣya* is the brightest gem. The Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy expounded by Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhaṣya* appealed to minds which were not satisfied with the Advaitic teachings of Śaṅkara. While Śaṅkara appealed to the head through his idealism and doctrine of Māyāvāda, Rāmānuja appealed to the heart through his realism and doctrine of loving devotion (*bhakti*) and self-surrender (*prapatti*). After completing his *Śrībhaṣya* Rāmānuja, toured extensively throughout the country to popularise his teachings.

Rāmānuja is said to have fulfilled his second vow of perpetuating Parāśara's name, by calling upon Bhaṭṭa, a son of his friend and follower Kūreśa, who was also called Parāśara, to compose a commentary on the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*. This commentary, the *Bhagavadguṇadarpaṇa* (literally, the mirror reflecting the Lord's auspicious qualities) is indeed the Viśiṣṭādvaita commentary on the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, extolling the Lord's

aganitakalyāṇaguṇas as opposed to the Advaitic commentary of Śaṅkara stressing on the *paratva* of the Nirguṇa Brahman.

By authorising Kurukeśa, son of his uncle Śrīśailapūrṇa, to compose an authoritative commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi* as taught and expounded by him, Rāmānuja fulfilled his third vow of perpetuating Nammāḻvār's name. This commentary is known as the "Six thousand ", and is the earlist one on the hymns of Nammāḻvār. It was the model upon which many compositions were written later, particularly in the *maṇipravāḻa* style.

Rāmānuja was not only a profound thinker, he was also a great organiser. His reform of the Śrīraṅgam temple administration is a significant landmark in the development of systematic worship in the Śrīvaiṣṇavite temples. He divided the Śrīvaiṣṇava world into a number of *ācārya*-dioceses, over each of which he appointed a pious householder as the head or *siṁhāsanādhipati*. A set of seventy-four spiritual leaders (*ācāryapuruṣas*) took up the work of teaching Viśiṣṭādvaita in the towns and villages of South India.

This move by Rāmānuja was an intermediate stage of informal organisations between the earlier system of personal choice of teacher-disciple that prevailed during the Nāthamuni - Rāmānuja period (9th or 10th century-early 12th century) and the period of the establishment of formal Maṭhas (14th

century).[1] It is not possible to trace in detail the entire succession in regard to these 74 *ācāryas*. Some families, however, still bear the names of these *ācāryas* like Embār, Nallān Cakravarti, Ālkoṇḍa Villi and so on.

It was but natural that when these *ācāryas* started teaching Viśiṣṭādvaita in tune with Rāmānuja's viewpoint, slightly varied interpretations according to individual perferences for Sanskrit and Tamil languages began to crop up. In course of time, these differences became marked (i.e. not merely *abhiprāya* and *ācārabheda*, but differences in ideas of *prapatti*, divine grace and position of Śrī) and gradually there emerged two major divisions in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community–the Northern school or Vaḍakalai and the Southern school or Teṅgalai. Here North and South are not in any way indicative of North and South India. Vaḍakalai indicates the school of thought prevalent in the northern part of the Tamil country with its cultural capital at Kāñcīpuram and Teṅgalai indicates the school of thought prevalent in the southern part of the Tamil country with its cultural capital at Śrīraṅgam. The usual and popular view is that the Vaḍakalai sect became distinct with Vedāntadeśika as its *ācārya* and the Teṅgalai sect became distinct with Maṇavāḷa Māmuni as its principal *ācārya*.

1 N. Jagadeesan, *History of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism in the Tamil Country (Post-Rāmānuja)*, p. 47, Koodal Publishers, Madurai, 1977.

It should be pointed out in the true spirit of Śrīvaiṣṇavism that this emergence of two principal sects was only a natural evolution. A true Śrīvaiṣṇavite instead of condemning the rift and the resulting tension between the two sects, should appreciate the positive aspect of this division. To the true devotee of Śrīvaiṣṇavism deeply rooted in South India, the Vaḍakalai sect constitutes the secondary root spreading all over the northern part of Tamil country and the Teṅgalai sect constitutes the secondary root spreading across the southern part of the Tamil country viz. the Kāveri delta centering around Śrīraṅgam. To a student of Śrīvaiṣṇavism this diversification, without secession from the mainstream of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, provides a treasure-house of invaluable literature which otherwise would never have been penned at all. It stands testimony to the "unity in diversity" principle incorporated in Śrīvaiṣṇavism. It is moreover indicative of the *sūkṣmabuddhi* (subtle intellect) of *pūrvācāryas* like Yāmuna and Rāmānuja whose philosophical works were capable of variegated interpretations, intelligent and thought-provoking in their own ways. It goes to the credit of later *ācāryas* like Vedāntadeśika and Maṇavāḷa Māmuni to have enriched the Śrīvaiṣṇava literary world with their innumerable commentaries. A true Śrīvaiṣṇavite, hence will not bemoan the split, if one may call it, but will thank his *ācāryas* for having provided valuable food for his thought.

The standard differences between the Vaḍakalais and the Teṅgalais are usually enumerated as eighteen and are termed *aṣṭādaśa bhedas*. One of the main points of dispute is the importance which each sect attaches to Sanskrit and Tamil languages. While the Vaḍakalais give priority to the chanting of *Vedas* in temples, the Teṅgalais give preference to the recitation of Tamil *prabandhams*. *Prapatti* is a philosophical point which divides Vaḍakalais and Teṅgalais. The word "*prapatti*" means "an approach to God". For the Vaḍakalais "*prapatti*" is qualified by certain conditions: a) acquisition of qualities which would make one fit for offering to God; b) avoidance of conduct not acceptable to God; c) faith that God alone is the protector; d) appeal for protection; e) a feeling of helplessness; and f) absolute surrender.

आनुकूल्यस्य सङ्कल्पः प्रातिकूल्यस्य वर्जनम्।
रक्षिष्यतीति विश्वासो गोप्तृत्ववरणं तथा।
आत्मनिक्षेप-कार्पण्ये षड्विधा शरणागतिः॥[1]

In this *aṅga-aṅgi-samuccaya*, *ātma-nikṣepa* alone is the *aṅgin* and the rest are *aṅgas*. This is proved beyond doubt by the following verse:

निक्षेपापरपर्यायो न्यासः षड्भाङ्ग-संयुतः।
संन्यासः त्याग इत्युक्तः शरणागतिरित्यपि॥[2]

For the Teṅgalais this *prapatti* is not qualified by any conditions. It is the only way for salvation. It is the first as well as the last way, and it can be

1 *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā*, 37- 28,29.

2 *Lakṣmī Tantra*, Adyar Library Series, 17-74.

performed even in the beginning i.e. without attempting other ways to salvation like *jñāna* and *bhakti yogas*. The Vaḍakalai point of view is that *prapatti* is to be attempted only as a last resort, after failing in *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti yogas*. These differences in turn leads to the question of whether Divine grace is set in motion by human effort or not i.e. whether it is *sahetuka* or *nirhetuka*. This again fringes on the question as to whether man has to expiate for his sins and then obtain Divine Grace, or whether Divine Grace being irresistible, compassion and grace are showered on erring souls, ignoring their faults or even delighting in their sins because it provides God with an opportunity for showering His Grace. This situation is somewhat eased by introducing "Śrī" as the *puruṣakāra* or Mediator, to intervene for mercy on behalf of erring souls to the Ever just and Lawful Lord. Her role as Divine Mother is accomplished by Her essential characteristic of compassion and for the Vaḍakalais Śrī is *puruṣakāra*; She is the *upāya* (means) even like Śrīman Nārāyaṇa for attaining salvation and She is also *upeya* (goal) like Lord Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha attended upon by ever-liberated souls (*nityasūris*) and other liberated souls. She is the *paramātmā* like Nārāyaṇa and is not *jivātmā*. She is also *vibhu* (all-pervasive) like Nārāyaṇa and can grant liberation (*mokṣa*). The Teṅgalais accept Her role as mediator and agree that She is a means for liberation. But they disagree in that She is a *jīvātmā* and is finite (*aṇu*) in nature.

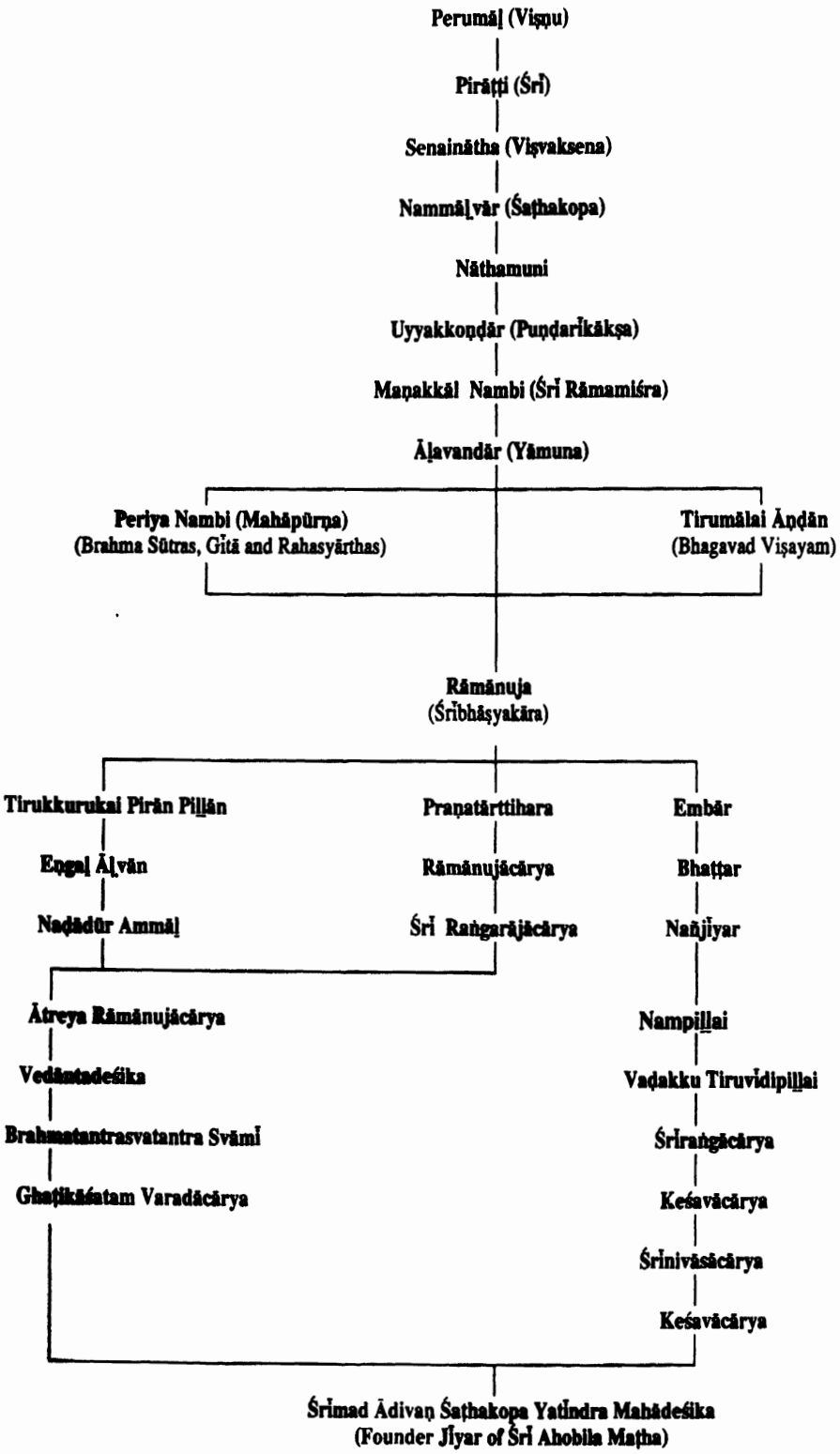
There is another point of difference regarding *kaivalya* which consists in self-realisation. While the Teṅgalais consider those who have reached *kaivalya* as liberated, the Vaḍagalais maintain that *kaivalya* is inferior to *paramapada* and is situated outside Vaikuṇṭha. There are also differences regarding the interpretation of the *caramaśloka* (*Gītā*, xviii, 66). The phrase "*sarvadharmān parityajya*" is interpreted by Vaḍakalais to mean those who are in capable of performing *bhakti yoga* but the Teṅgalais interpret it as "having to give up all duties" before seeking refuge in the Lord. Post-*prapatti* sins are to be atoned for afresh by Vaḍakalais but for the Teṅgalais, *prapatti* once done holds good forever. One other point of difference relates to the performance of one's daily duties (*nityakarma*) like *sandhyāvandana* etc.; for the Teṅgalais a *prapanna* need not perform these duties.

In conclusion it may be said that these differences were a natural result of the evolution in religious thought in the course of centuries. Neither the Āḻvārs nor the early Ācāryas spelt them out. In course of time this gave rise to subdivisions within Vaḍakalais, like the followers of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha, Śrī Āṇḍavan Āśrama, Parakāla Maṭha and within Teṅgalais like Vānamāmalai Maṭha and Yatirāja Maṭha. These divisions are not exhaustive, because numerous groups based on differences of *deśācāra* (local variations) tend to develop. The differences generally arise out of local traditions, affiliations to particular Ācāryas and Maṭhas and family practices. However it should be

noted that the *Pāñcarātra* and *Vaikhānasa Āgamas* are not associated with Vaḍakalai and Teṅgalai sects, but cut across this division.

The following is the Vaḍakalai succession table originating from Lord Nārāyaṇa upto Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar, the founder of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha (1378 A.D.). It is not a family tree but rather *guru-śiṣya* lineage.[1]

1 See *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā* (Tamil), April 1966.


Perumāḷ (Viṣṇu)
Pirāṭṭi (Śrī)
Senainātha (Viṣvaksena)
Nammāḻvār (Śaṭhakopa)
Nāthamuni
Uyyakkoṇḍār (Puṇḍarīkākṣa)
Maṇakkāl Nambi (Śrī Rāmamiśra)
Āḷavandār (Yāmuna)
Periya Nambi (Mahāpūrṇa)
(Brahma Sūtras, Gītā and Rahasyārthas)
Tirumālai Āṇḍān
(Bhagavad Viṣayam)
Rāmānuja
(Śrībhāṣyakāra)
Tirukkurukai Pirān Piḷḷān
Praṇatārttihara
Embār
Eṅgaḷ Āḻvān
Rāmānujācārya
Bhaṭṭar
Naḍāḍūr Ammāḷ
Śrī Raṅgarājācārya
Nañjīyar
Ātreya Rāmānujācārya
Nampiḷḷai
Vedāntadeśika
Vaḍakku Tiruvīdipiḷḷai
Brahmatantrasvatantra Svāmī
Śrīraṅgācārya
Ghaṭikāśatam Varadācārya
Keśavācārya
Śrīnivāsācārya
Keśavācārya
Śrīmad Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika
(Founder Jīyar of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha)

Śrī Ahobilam

The Lord and the Kṣetra

उग्रोऽप्यनुग्र एवायं स्वभक्तानां नृकेसरी।
केसरीव स्वपोतानां अन्येषां उग्रविग्रहः॥

The unique Man-Lion, Lord Narasiṁha has incarnated Himself in *arcā* form in several places. The most important among them is Śrī Ahobilam because according to our ancient scriptures (the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*) this is the place where Narasiṁha *avatāra* and *Hiraṇya-saṁhāra* took place. The legend of the *avatāra* of Lord Narasiṁha is also told in the *Bhāgavata-*, the *Vāyu-*, the *Padma-* and the *Kūrma- purāṇas*, and in the *Harivaṁśa*. The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* contains the earliest allusion to Narasiṁha. The *Nṛsiṁhapurāṇa* begins with a salutation to Lord Narasiṁha and narrates the legend of Narasiṁha through sage Vyāsa's disciple Romaharṣaṇa.

The presiding deity of Śrī Ahobilam is variously called – Narasiṁha, Nṛsiṁha, Ahobileśvara, Ahobila Narasiṁha, Ahobila Nātha. He is said to have emerged out of a pillar in Hiraṇyakaśipu's palace on the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of the Vaiśākha month (*vaiśākhaśukla-caturdaśī*). In Indian tradition that day is regarded as Narasiṁha Jayantī.[1] The Lord is described in the *Nṛsiṁhasahasranāmastotra* as *para-dharmā*, *para-jñāna*, and

1 Śrīvaiṣṇavas celebrate only three Jayantīs of the Lord - those of Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Narasiṁha.

para-bhakti. He is a form of Lord Nārāyaṇa and is the source of all *mantras*. He is full of effulgence and brilliance (*tejomaya*). He is known for His roaring (*nāda*) and big chortle (*aṭṭahāsa*).

The Lord in this *avatāra* is said to have lived in Śrī Ahobilam after killing Hiraṇyakaśipu. Traditional accounts relate that He seemed to have completely forgotten about Mahālakṣmī and His original abode, Śrī Vaikuṇṭha. Since Goddess Śrī cannot remain without Her Lord, She devised a plan to join Him. The forest tribes who lived in and around Śrī Ahobilam are called Ceñcus. Goddesss Śrī took birth as the daughter of a Ceñcu chief. Enamoured by Her ravishing beauty, the Lord married Her and thus Lord Nārāyaṇa and the Universal Mother were united once more. Hence it is, that the consort of the Lord here is called Ceñcu Lakṣmī. As a result, the Ceñcu tribes became ardent votaries of Lord Viṣṇu.

Location

Ahobilam is one of the three sacred places in the long range of disjointed hills that go to make up that stretch of Eastern Ghats from Krishna river down south to the Tirupati Hills - called "Nalla Malais". This range, nearly 250 miles long, starts from the sacred Śaivite temple Māllikārjuna - called "Śrīśailaparvatam" situated in the northern end of the river Krishna. The middle shrine is indeed Śrī Ahobilam, a Śrīvaiṣṇavite shrine of great

antiquity. Tirupati or Tirumala is, of course, the Śrīvaiṣṇavite shrine of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara at the southern end.

Ahobalam (Lo! what strength!) or *Ahobilam* (Lo! what a cave!) is a village and a shrine in the Nalla Malais (Black Mountain or in Tamil "Good Mountain") in the Siruvel Taluk of Kurnool District between 15° 8' N and 78° 45' E. It has two parts namely *Diguva* (Lower) Ahobilam Temple at the foot of the hills, *Eguva* (Upper) or *Pedda* Ahobilam about four miles higher up, and a small shrine on the summit. While the *Eguva* temple is considered to be more important from the religious view-point, the Lower temple is architecturally more interesting. It contains beautiful panels from the *Rāmāyaṇa* inscribed on its walls. It has two great stone *maṇṭapams* supported by pillars, eight feet in circumference, hewn out of rock. Fergusson mentions that a Kalyāṇa Maṇṭapam (wedding hall) supported by 64 pillars (each of which is carved into several miniature pillars) is a fine specimen of architecture and though wanting in delicacy and elegance, is full of character and merit.[1]

This place has been sung by the Śrīvaiṣṇava saint, Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār in his mystic outpourings. It is one of the 108 *Divya Deśas* praised by the

1 'Dravidian Style', *History of India and Eastern Architecture*, I , iv, 404, London John Murray Albermale Dt. W. 1910.

Āḻvārs. He has celebrated this deity in a decad called *'Aṅgaṇ ñālam'*[1] : "The elephants at the forest-shrine of Ahobilam pay obeisance to Lord Narasiṁha by offering their ivory tusks." This hymn is interpreted by the pontiffs of Ahobila Maṭha as a symbolic reference to the future Ācāryas (acting as mediators) who will accept the surrender of their devotees and offer them to the Lord.

Ādi Śaṅkara praises this deity in his two poems, *Śrī Lakṣmīnṛsiṁha-karāvalamba-stotra* and *Śrī Lakṣmīnṛsiṁhapañcaratnastotram.* The *Guru-paramparāprabhāvam* speaks of Nammāḻvār's visit to this place in search of Lord Narasiṁha:

> ஆடியாடி யகம் கரைந்து, இசை
> பாடிப்பாடிக் கண்ணீர் மல்கி, எங்கும்
> நாடிநாடி நரசிங்கா வென்று
> வாடிவாடும் இவ்வாணுதலே.[2]

Rāmānuja's visit is also found mentioned in the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam Ārāyirappaḍi*, as also that of Vedāntadeśika and Nayinārācārya. Rāmānuja is said to have issued an edict that Narasiṁha worship should be done daily by all Siṁhāsanādhipatis. Vādikesari Aḻagiya

1 அங்கண் ஞாலம் ...
பைங்கண் ஆனைக்கொம்பு கொண்டு பத்திமையால், அடிக்கீழ்ச்
செங்கண் ஆளி யிட்டிறைஞ்சும் சிங்கவேள் குன்றமே.
Periya-tirumoḻi, 1-7-1.

2 *Tiruvāymoḻi*, 2-4-1.

Maṇavāḷa Jīyar (author of *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Aṣṭakastotram*) and Divyakavi Pillai Perumāḷ Ayyaṅgār[1] have also sung in praise of the Lord. The *Caitanya Vijaya* speaks of the Bengali saint Śrī Caitanya's visit to Ahobilam.

Tradition has it that it is the idol form of the Lord that was worshipped by the *Vibhava* form of the same Lord, in Śrī Rāma Avatāra and Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara (Lord of Seven Hills). It is said that Lord Śrī Rāma worshipped Lord Narasiṁha in this place and sang five verses in His praise. It is known as *Narasiṁha Pañcāmṛtam* found in the *Śeṣa Dharma*, 47th chapter of the *Harivaṁśa*. It is said that only after such a worship did Lord Śrī Rāma get information about Śrī Sītā's whereabouts which ultimately led to Rāvaṇavadha and reunion with Sītā Devī. In the *Veṅkaṭācalamāhātmya* it is mentioned that Lord Śrīnivāsa and Goddess Padmāvati worshipped the Lord at Ahobilam and were then united in divine wedlock. Hence, like Śrīraṅganātha, Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha is also called "Periya Perumāḷ" - the great God or God of gods.

The Holy shrine of Ahobilam is termed as *Navanṛsiṁha-kṣetram* as nine forms of Lord Narasiṁha are housed in these forest shrines.

1 Nūttreṭṭu Tirupati Antādi, *Aṣṭa-prabandham*, p. 295.

ज्वालाहोबिलमालोलक्रोडाकारञ्जभार्गवाः।
योगानन्दच्छत्रवट-पावना नवमूर्तयः ॥[1]

The hills of Ahobilam or Siṅgaveḷkuṇram as the Āḻvārs extolled this place, symbolise the trunk of Ādi-śeṣa, Lord Viṣṇu's serpent, its hood being Tirumala and its tail Śrīśaila.

Of the nine Narasiṁha shrines, the Mālola Narasiṁha is the Ārādhyadevatā of the Jīyars of Ahobilam. This idol is said to have been installed by Sage Bharadvāja. It is significant in that it is the *śāntarūpa* of the Lion-God. We have the Lokamātā Mahālakṣmī seated on the lap of Her pacified Lord - the Lord who delights or pleases the Universal Mother. The Lord is *Lakṣmyā samāliṅgitavāmabhāga*, for *bhaktānugraha*.

The Greatness of Narasiṁha Avatāra

It is a well-known fact that the *vibhava* form (*avatāra*) of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa descending from Śrīvaikuṇṭha to this mundane world is for *duṣṭanigraha* and *śiṣṭaparipālana*. In the Lord's mind, the *śiṣṭaparipālana* is given pride of place by the Lord's own words in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (IV. 8):

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।

1 See *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā* (English) Twelfth Annual Number, Special Issue, Vol. 13, p. 10, June 1992, Hyderabad.

The use of the particle *ca* is significant in that, during the process of affording protection to His devotees, the destruction of evil forces ensues as a natural result. It is this noble trait of *śiṣṭaparipālana* that lends an added charm to the glory of Lord's *avatāra* as "Narasiṁha" –

नरवत् सिंहवत् चैव रूपं यस्य महात्मनः।[1]

the beatific and beautiful Man-Lion form. It incorporates the "unity in diversity" principle very aptly. Here the two apparently diverse elements - the *ugra* and the *bhadra nṛsiṁhas* are interfused into this unique form.

Let us consider the circumstances leading to this glorious *avatāra*. We have the *akiñcana-bhakta-dānavaśiśu* Prahlāda unarmed, standing before the terrifying demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, and chanting with immense and intense faith, *harināma* and *harināma* alone, though taunted and tormented by his own father to recite his name. Undaunted the child stood, spurning all material wealth and pleasures, ready to face innumerable travails for the sake of his Lord Hari and declaring in unequivocal terms that Lord Hari alone is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, and that no power in the world can disprove it. It is no wonder that the Lord (becomes a slave as it were, to such a devotee who has *mahāviśvāsa*) rushed to his succour unasked for, and impregnated all things great and small, *tṛṇa* and *stambha* alike with the

1 *Mantrarājapadastotra*, 6.

unique form of Narasiṁha. Unable to brook *hiṁsā* in any form (thought, word or deed) to such a Bhakta, and to prove the child's assertion of His omnipresence, the Lord manifested Himself as Narasiṁha from that particular pillar which the Dānava king pin-pointed and struck with his palm. It is added as a beautiful after-thought by Vedāntadeśika that except for that one pillar in Hiraṇyakaśipu's palace, all the three worlds are still impregnated with the form of Narasiṁha:

भक्तस्य दानवशिशोः परिपालनाय भद्रां नृसिंहकुहनामधिजग्मुषस्ते।
स्तम्भैकवर्जमधुनापि करीश! नूनं त्रैलोक्यमेतदखिलं नरसिंहगर्भम् ॥ [1]

One other aspect of this *avatāra* which Vedāntadeśika highlights is that the Lord removed the odium of childlessness even in the case of an inanimate object the *stambha*; and in this process, enabled it to become a grandmother of Brahmā.

या काचित् सहसा महासुरगृहस्थूणा पितामह्यभूत् ।[2]

This *avatāra* exhibits a unique combination of the Lord's *paratva* and *saulabhya* - the *para* aspect of the Lord (delineating the *ugrasiṁha* aspect),

सटापटलभीषणे सरभसाट्टहासोद्भटे
स्फुरत्करुधि परिस्फुटद्भ्रुकुटिकेऽपि वक्त्रे कृते।[3]

1 *Varadarājapañcāśat*, 23.
2 *Daśāvatārastotra*, 5.
3 *Kāmāsikāṣṭaka*, 7.

showing the fury and anger of the Lord when His helpless *paramabhakta* is tortured and the *saulabhya* aspect of the same Lord delineating the *vātsalya* and *karuṇā* of the human form (*kapaṭakesarin*)

कृपा कपटकेसरिन् दनुजडिम्भदत्तस्तना
सरोजसदृशा दृशा व्यतिविषज्य ते व्यज्यते ॥[1]

showing the motherly affection of the same Lord towards the youngest and perhaps His greatest devotee Prahlāda, suckling him with the "milk of human kindness". The Divine grace and fury functioning in the same *avatāra* simultaneously and in the same organ (the Eyes) has been pointed out beautifully by none other than *kavisiṁha* Vedāntadeśika who highlights the Lord's *aghaṭita-ghaṭanā-sāmarthya* (capacity to bring together the incompatible and the impossible). Vedāntadeśika uses almost similar (same) words in his *Dayāśatakam* (84) also:

दये वृषगिरीशितुर्दनुजडिम्भदत्तस्तना
सरोजसदृशा दृशा समुदिताकृतिर्दृश्यसे ॥

Śrīvatsāṅkamiśra (Kūrattāḻvān) has extolled this unique Man-Lion *avatāra*. Born out of a pillar, neither man nor beast and yet both man and lion–His very *avatāra* bespeaks His supremacy and transcendance. These extraordinary features certainly do give away His *paratva*.

नरसिंहतनुरगौणी समसमयसमुद्भवश्च भक्तगिरः।
स्तम्भे च सम्भवस्ते पिशुनयति परेशतां वरद! ॥[2]

1 *Kāmāsikāṣṭaka*, 7.
2 *Varadarājastava*, 71.

Parāśarabhaṭṭa, in his commentary on the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* - the *Bhagavad-guṇadarpaṇa* explains the word *Nārasiṁhavapuḥ*[1] thus:

स्वभक्त्यन्तरायनिवारणमपि प्रदर्शयति.....
तत् क्षणप्रतिपन्न यथाकामदिव्यमहानृसिंहसंहननः

and adds that He is *Śrīmān*[2] –

परस्पर-दुर्धर-अपूर्व-विकृतस्वरूप-परिग्रहादपिश्रीमान् -
सौन्दर्यलावण्यादिभिः अतिमनोहरदिव्यरूपः।

Tirumaḻiśai Āḻvār (Bhaktisāra) expresses this idea in a similar strain[3] - "because He assumes the form of the Lion, He is beautiful." One cannot look for a better credential for the charm and beauty of Lord Narasiṁha than what has been said by Godā (Āṇḍāḷ), when she dreams about her wedding and relates that dream to her friend and refers to the form of Narasiṁha twice *viz.* (i) when she enters the marriage hall[4] and (ii) when He holds Her hands above His, during the *lāja-homa.*[5] He was "*Kāle Nṛsiṁha*"[6] to Rukmiṇī Devī, in her love-epistle to Lord Kṛṣṇa. This *avatāra* stands as a class apart in that it was

1 p.148 Viśiṣṭādvaita Pracāriṇī Sabha, 1983.

2 Ibid. p. 149.

3 *Iyaṛpā - Nānmukan Tiruvantādi*, 22:
அழகியான் தானே அரியுருவன் தானே

4 *Nāccyār Tirumoḻi*, vi, 2: கோளரி மாதவன் கோவிந்தன்...

5 Ibid.vi, 9: அரிமுகன் அச்சுதன் கைம்மேல் என்கைவைத்து
பொரிமுகந் தட்டக் களக்கண்டேன் தோழீநான்.

6 *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, X, lii, 38.

instantaneous, at the right moment and the achievement of its purpose too was instantaneous.

Another fact that surfaces from this glorious *avatāra* is that the Lord's compassion, all-encompassing as it is, extends even to the demon king Hiraṇyakaśipu who hated Him most. Obsessed by thoughts of Lord Hari, His Greatness and Immanence, he uttered the Lord's Name with hatred and fear. Ironically this earned liberation for him in the end.

It will be fitting to conclude this chapter with the following second *śloka* of the *Ārttatrāṇa-parāyaṇa Nārāyaṇastotra*:[1]

प्रह्लादास्ति यदीश्वरो वद हरिः सर्वत्र मे दर्शय
स्तम्भे चैनमिति ब्रुवन्तमसुरं तत्राविरासीद्धरिः।
वक्षस्तस्य विदारयन् निजजने वात्सल्यमावेदयन्
आर्तत्राणपरायणः स भगवान् नारायणो मे गतिः॥

1 Ascribed to Kureśa.

SAṀNYĀSA DHARMA IN ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVISM

The contribution of holy persons and saṁnyāsins (termed variously as sages, saints, ascetics) to the development of world religions and thought is invaluable. The Indian panorama, fused as it is with variegated cultures and religions provides an unending line of these enlightened souls (Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Mahāvīra, Buddha and so on) who spurned material pleasures and worked for the service of humanity. It is to these ascetics that India owes largely all that is valuable and enduring in her cultural and spiritual life.

The *saṁnyāsa* tradition or asceticism is not new to India. S. Radhakrishnan observes that from the beginning of her history, India has adored and idolised not soldiers and statesmen, not men of science and industry, not even poets and philosophers, but those rare and chastened spirits – the saints or ascetics. The spectacle of these holy souls walking from one corner of the country to the other through dust and din, in rain and sunshine, unmindful of the privations and ever seeking the goal of the divine and spreading the message of the divine is a familiar sight from days of yore. The concept of asceticism has so much fascinated the western mind that the French philosopher Renou in his *Religions of Ancient India* considers Hinduism as the very type of a religion of renunciation.[1] J.C. Oman in *The Mystics, Ascetics*

1 *Hinduism*, p. 5, University of London, Althone Press, London, 1953.

and Saints of India goes to the extent of declaring that the only possible state of religious life is the one involving asceticism and feels that the very spirit of the East is found to be embodied in the *ascetic dharma*.[1]

According to the *Smṛtis*, a *dvija* (twice-born) should pass through the four stages of life:of a student (Brahmacārin), a householder (Gṛhastha), a hermit (Vānaprastha) and finally an ascetic (Saṁnyāsin). In days of yore, the fourth stage was permitted only to old people after a well-spent life.[2] Later, a Brahmacārin was admitted into the order, if his tongue, emotions, appetite and speech are pure and under strict control.[3] The *Jābālopaniṣad* allows the option to regard *saṁnyāsa* as the fourth stage after any of the first two *āśramas*. Owing to the great similarity between the third and fourth stage, the third stage came to be gradually ignored and people passed directly from the life of a householder to that of an ascetic.

In the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, this *āśrama* is considered as a very exalted stage of one's life and is assigned to the final stages of one's existence. This system has been sanctified by Yāmunācārya, Rāmānuja, Embār, Nañjīyar, Periya Jīyar, Brahmatantrasvatantra Jīyar, Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar, Rāmānuja

1 T. Fisher Unwin, Patermoster Square, London, 1905, p.10.

2 A. Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 79, Sixth Edition, S. Chand & Co, Delhi, 1969.

3 Vide *Nṛsiṁha Purāṇa*, 60-2-4.

Jīyar, Śrīmad Āṇḍavan Svāmī and so on. It is said that there were over 700 *saṁnyāsins* (ascetics) in Rāmānuja's entourage. Rāmānuja was so zealous to uphold the ideals of this *āśrama* that he commissioned his (former Advaita preceptor) disciple Yādava Prakāśa to write out a treatise on *saṁnyāsa dharma* entitled the *Yatidharmasamuccaya*. As there are exceptions to every rule, in this glittering line of Ācāryas (preceptors), we have the examples of Nāthamuni and Vedānta Deśika, who have accomplished all this and more, without entering into the fourth *āśrama*.

The ascetic is a symbol of holy life. One who enters the superior order of an ascetic not only separates himself from all temporal ties and carnal affections, but also rises superior to the householder (*gṛhastha*) who conforms to the rites and ceremonies enjoined by ordinary *karmakāṇḍa*. Sage Yājñavalkya states that the difference between a *saṁnyāsin* and a *gṛhastha* is comparable to the difference between the resplendent sun and the firefly; the difference between the huge Mt. Meru and the minute mustard seed.

सूर्यखद्योतयोर्यद्वत् मेरुसर्षपयोर्यथा ।
अन्तरं हि महद् दृष्टं तथा भिक्षुगृहस्थयोः ॥[1]

He is a *saṁnyāsin* because he is a *sarvasaṅga parityāgī* i.e. he abandons all earthly possessions – father, mother, wife, son and daughter. It is a total secesssion from domestic life followed by certain purificatory

1 See *Śrī Nrisimha Priyā*, p. 4, August 1992.

ceremonies as laid down in the sacred texts. Thereafter he becomes a *bhikṣu* (beggar) living purely on alms, a *parivrājaka* (itinerant) wandering around, homeless. He is given to severe austerities and self-mortification and is concerned principally with restraint of senses and contemplation of the highest reality, Brahman. Manu declares, "Let the unimpassioned man relinquish all affections for wife, children and possessions and enter the fourth order. Let him forego the three objects of human existence *viz.* pleasure, wealth and virtue."[1] In the *Nāradaparivrājakopaniṣad*[2] the characteristics of an ascetic are laid down as follows:

कामः क्रोधस्तथा दर्पो लोभमोहादयश्च ये।
तांस्तु दोषान् परित्यज्य परिव्राण्निर्ममो भवेत्॥

रागद्वेषवियुक्तात्मा समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः।
प्राणिहिंसानिवृत्तश्च मुनिः स्यात्सर्वनिस्स्पृहः॥

दम्भाहङ्कारनिर्मुक्तो हिंसापैशुन्यवर्जितः।
आत्मज्ञानगुणोपेतो यतिर्मोक्षमवाप्नुयात्॥

Sage Jamadagni declares that even the external guise of a *saṁnyāsin* has its own greatness[3] –

दुर्वृत्तो वा सुवृत्तो वा मूर्खः पण्डित एव वा।
काषायमात्रवेषेण (दण्डमात्रेण) यतिः पूज्यो युधिष्ठिर॥

1 VI - 33.

2 III - 33, 35, 59.

3 Yādavaprakāśa, *Yatidharmasamuccaya*, with Appendix, *Yatidharma-saṅgraha*, p. 85, Pub. Śrī Veṅkateśa Granthamālā, Śrīmad Ubhaya Vedāntā-cārya Pīṭham, Śrīraṅgam, 1973.

The Lord Himself has declared in the *śrāddhaprakaraṇa* of the *Mahābhārata*[1] thus –

यत्र भिक्षुरहं तत्र तं च मां विद्धि पाण्डव।

"Wherever you see a *saṁnyāsin*, Oh Pāṇḍava! know him to be Myself."

Through this we come to know that the *saṁnyāsin* is of the nature of Lord Viṣṇu (*viṣṇusvarūpa*). The same point is brought out by Sage Dattātreya:[2]

त्रिदण्डिरूपवद्विप्रः साक्षान्नारायणात्मकः।
यस्तु पूजयते भक्त्या विष्णुस्तेन प्रपूजितः॥

द्वे रूपे वासुदेवस्य चलं चाचलमेव च।
चलं संन्यासिनां रूपम् अचलं प्रतिमादिकम्॥

"A *tridaṇḍi saṁnyāsin* is none other than Lord Nārāyaṇa and one who worships a *saṁnyāsin* is actually worshipping Lord Viṣṇu Himself. Lord Vāsudeva has two forms - one moving and the other fixed. The moving form is *saṁnyāsin* and the fixed form is the idol form (*arcā rūpa*) as worshipped in temples."

The *Yatiliṅgasamarthana* of Vātsya Varadācārya is in three *skandhas* and presents the characteristics, qualifications and duties of the four classes of *Śrīvaiṣṇava* ascetics. It is based on the *Śāṭyānakopaniṣad* and *Smṛti* texts like

1 *Yatidharmasamuccaya*, p. 84.
2 Ibid, pp. 74-75.

those of **Hārīta, Atri,** Vṛddhajābāli, Uśanas, Aṅgiras, Śaunaka and Śāṇḍilya. Quoting **Hārīta, Vātsya** Varadācārya states:

चतुर्विधा भिक्षवस्तु स्मृताः सामान्यलिङ्गिनः ।
तेषां पृथक् पृथङ्नाम वृत्तिभेदात् कृतं श्रुतौ ॥
कुटीचको बहूदकः हंसश्चैव तृतीयकः ।
चतुर्थः परमो हंसो यो यः पश्चात् स उत्तमः॥
लिङ्गं तु वैष्णवं तेषां त्रिदण्डं सपवित्रकम् ॥[1]

The Śrīvaiṣṇava ascetics fall into four groups namely Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, Haṁsa and Paramahaṁsa, each latter one being superior to the previous one.

Saṁnyāsa is to be resorted to in the Uttarāyaṇa, when the sun is in its northward course. The intendant has to find an ascetic possessed of the virtue of quiescence. He should observe him and note for three months the duties of the ascetic. He should purify himself with the chanting (*japa*) of the sacred Gāyatrī and should perform a sacrifice to Prajāpati. According to the *Yajur-veda*,[2] he should be a *tridaṇḍin*. Hārīta[3] states:

त्रिदण्डं वैष्णवं सौम्यं सत्वचं समपर्वकम् ।
वेष्टितं कृष्णगोबालरज्ज्वा तु चतुरङ्गुलम् ॥

1 Śāstra Muktāvaḷi Series, p. 3, ed. P.B. Ananthacharya, Sri Sudarsana Press, Conjeeveram, 1911.

2 III-58.

3 *Yatiliṅgasamarthana*, p. 6.

An ascetic should take three staves of bamboo and tie them together with a rope of cow's tail, four *aṅgulas* in length.

A *tridaṇḍin* according to Manu[1] is one who has restraint over his speech, mind and body, and does not imply mere physical appearance of carrying a *tridaṇḍa*.

वाग्दण्डोऽथ मनोदण्डः कायदण्डस्तथैव च ।
यस्यैते निहिता बुद्धौ त्रिदण्डीति स उच्यते ॥

A *saṁnyāsin* should always possess the following five things: *yajñopavīta, tridaṇḍa, jalapavitra, kaupīna* and *kaṭivastra*.[2]

उपवीतं त्रिदण्डं च पात्रं जलपवित्रकम् ।
कौपीनं कटिवस्त्रं च न त्याज्यं यावदायुषम् ॥

The *tridaṇḍa* itself is *viṣṇurūpa* and has to be carried always.

विष्णुरूपं त्रिदण्डाख्यं सर्वथा धारयेद्यतिः ।

A Pāñcarātra text, *Tattvasāgarasaṁhitā*[3] lays down thus –

त्रिदण्डस्याग्रभागं तु संस्मरेत् परमेष्ठिनम् ।
द्वितीयं पुरुषात्मानं विश्वात्मानं तु मध्यमम् ॥
त्रिदण्डं समुदायेन विष्णुरूपं स्मरेद्यतिः ।

The Vyūhamūrtis *viz.* Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, and finally Lord Nārāyaṇa are integrated into the *tridaṇḍa*. These

1 *Manusmṛti*, XII. 10.
2 *Yatiliṅgasamarthana*, p. 8.
3 *Yatidharmasamuccaya*, p. 16.

five forms have Parameṣṭhyātmā, Puruṣātmā, Viśvātmā, Nivṛttyātmā and Sarvātmā respectively as their attributes. The *tridaṇḍa* should be mentally divided into five parts and should be meditated upon by the *saṁnyāsin* from the tip (*Parameṣṭyātmā*) to the trunk (*Sarvātmā*) respectively as the forms of Lord Viṣṇu. Hence, whenever the *tridaṇḍa* is placed down, a *mantra* with the following meaning is uttered: "Oh ground! may you become the sanctified place for the *tridaṇḍa* envisaging Lord Viṣṇu's form." Hence, whenever the *tridaṇḍa* is carried, the following *mantra* is to be uttered: "*Sakhā me gopāya!*", "friend, protect me!". Can a mere *acetana* bamboo *tridaṇḍa* afford protection? Obviously no. It is the *viṣṇusvarūpa* within that protects.

The *śikhā* or tuft is a necessity of a *vaiṣṇava* ascetic. Sage Śaunaka declares:

शिखावर्जं ऋतुसन्धिषु वापयेत् । न रोमाणि वापयेत् ।

Hence Vātsya Varadācārya states:

अतः उपवीतादिवत् शिखापि चतुर्णामपि यतीनाम् अवश्यं धार्या ।[1]

The sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) is also very essential to the *vaiṣṇava* ascetic. Sages Śaunaka, Atri, Hārīta, Vṛddhajābāli and Dattātreya equivocally stress the necessity of donning the sacred thread by the *saṁnyāsin*; and they

1 *Yatiliṅgasamarthana*, p. 10.

declare that all their deeds will bear no fruit if done without *yajñopavīta*, and that atonement (*prāyaścitta*) has to be done for this sin.

Sage Aṅgiras states:

यतेर्लिङ्गं प्रवक्ष्यामि येनासौ लक्ष्यते यतिः।
ब्रह्मसूत्रं त्रिदण्डं च वस्त्रं जन्तुनिवारणम् ॥
शिक्यं पात्रं बृसीञ्चैव कौपीनं कटिवेष्टनम्।
यस्यैतद्विद्यते लिङ्गं स यतिर्नेतरो यतिः॥ [1]

Sage Uśanas declares:

ब्रह्मसूत्रपरित्यागात् ब्रह्मचारी गृही वनी।
परिव्राड् वापि पतति तस्मात् तत्र परित्यजेत्॥ [2]

A *saṁnyāsin* has to perform *śauca* (purificatory functions) like brushing teeth, taking bath etc., just as a householder, but three or four times as much. He is to beg for his food and should eat only once in a day and only a specific quantity. He should eat food not to satisty himself but only for his sustenance. He should bow to God and other elder ascetics (*vṛddha-yatis*), according to the rules of his order, but he should not pay obeisance to a householder however exalted the latter may be. The ascetic is not to utter any benediction when a person bows to him, but should only utter the name of Lord Nārāyaṇa. He should not mingle freely and should not speak in a flowery language which may attract people:

1 *Yatidharmasamuccaya*, p.13.
2 Ibid. p.12.

संस्कृतां न वदेद् वाणीं बालवन्मूकवच्चरेत् ।[1]

In the *Nāradaparivrājakopaniṣad*,[2] the daily routine of an ascetic (*yaticaryā*) and the fruit thereof (*tatphalam*) are laid down:

सांनिध्ये विषयाणां यः समर्थोऽविकलेन्द्रियः।
सुप्तवद्वर्तते नित्यं स भिक्षुर्मुग्ध उच्यते॥
रागं द्वेषं मदं मायां द्रोहं मोहं परात्मसु ।
षडेतानि यतिर्नित्यं मनसापि न चिन्तयेत् ॥

When a *saṁnyāsin* dies, he is to be buried in a pit and covered with salt. No mourning is to be observed and no ceremonies (*śrāddhas*) are to be performed except *pārvaṇa* on the eleventh day of his death.

The schism in Śrīvaiṣṇavism has left its marks on the ascetics too. A Vaḍakalai ascetic does not offer obeisance to a householder unless he happens to be the ascetic's own Ācārya. He is not to touch any metallic vessels. He is expected to live only by accepting the specified quantity of food offered to him by orthodox Śrīvaiṣṇava Brahmins. The Teṅgalai ascetic, on the other hand, offers and receives obeisance even from a householder. He need not beg for his food and is allowed the use of metallic vessels of all kinds.[3] He wears the upper cloth (*uttarīya*) up to the waist and another cloth on the waist.

1 *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*, August 1992, p.8.

2 III - 68,70.

3 K. Rangachari, *Śrīvaiṣṇava Brahmins*, p. 46, Bulletin of Madras Govt. Museum, Vol. II, Madras, 1931.

The Vaḍakalai ascetics wear the cloth only up to the knee and the other cloth should be kept under the arm.

All these are only minor differences and the *Dharmaśāstras* accord the ascetic a pre-eminent position and authority in religious matters. Whenever difficult questions arise about the validity of things from the religious point of view, the political heads generally consult the ascetics. Paul Deussen in his *Philosophy of Upanishads*[1] observes, "the entire history of mankind does not produce much that approaches in grandeur to this thought enshrined in the *saṁnyāsa dharma.*"

The Maṭhas and Maṭhādhipati-yatis

The Maṭhas or religious institutions, ascetic in nature, were a continuation of an evolving pattern within Hinduism. Brahmanical Hinduism managed to have its way as long as there was no organised opposition to its tenets and way of life. In order to counteract the upsurge of heretical organisations and the onslaughts of Islam and Christianity, Hinduism had to adopt many methods. The Bhakti movement was one, the temple organisation was another, and the religious institutions or Maṭhas were the third. These three provided jointly the socio-religious framework needed to counter heretical religions with a proselytising mission.[1] There is no basis in Hindu

1 Oriental Publishers, p. 382, New Delhi, 1972.

1 *History of Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country (Post - Rāmānuja)*, p. 149.

Dharma for proselytisation and so there were no institutions for that purpose. The business of the Hindu Maṭhas was rather to conserve and save, regulate, guide and consolidate, than to convert and expand. The numerous discussions which the religious leaders of these institutions held with the leader of the heretical sects were not attempts so much to spread Hinduism as to destroy heresy. So, the Maṭhas were a sort of new defence system to preserve Hinduism.

The Vaiṣṇava Maṭhas were thus a continuation of an evolving pattern within Hinduism. Naturally there were differences in the set up and rules regarding the various Maṭhas – Śaiva Maṭhas of Dharmapuram, Tiruvāvaḍuturai, the Advaita Maṭhas of Śṛṅgerī, Pūrī, Kāñcī and the Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṭha of Ahobilam, Parakāla Maṭha, Śrīmad Āṇḍavan Āśrama, Vānamāmalai Maṭha and so on. One cardinal distinction is that the Śaiva Maṭhas are invariably presided over by the non-Brahmins, especially, "Caturthas" while the Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita Maṭhas are headed by Brahmins. The Advaita Maṭhas, on the analogy of Ādi Śaṅkara, are headed by celibates (*naiṣṭhika brahmacārins*) and never by householders or those who had been *grhasthas*.[1]

1 N. Jagadeesan, *History of Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country (Post Rāmānuja)*, p. 150.

The pontifical head (Maṭhādhipati) is primarily an ascetic (*yati*) and in addition he is expected to perform administrative and social duties too. He has to perform five purificatory acts (*pañcasaṁskāra*) for his disciples, receive acts of total surrender (*bharanyāsa*) from whomsoever so desires, propagate Śrī Rāmānuja's philosophy by discourses and by holding meetings of learned scholars (*vidvatsadas*). Hence, even though a *saṁnyāsin* should not acquire wealth, for the sake of the Maṭha, the spiritual head is empowered to raise funds. It is laid down in the *Parāśarasaṁhitā* thus:

माठपत्यं यतिः कुर्यात् विष्णुधर्माभिवृद्धये ।
विष्णोर्नित्योत्सवाय वेदान्तस्थापनाय च ।
अन्यथा यः करोत्येवं स याति नरकं ध्रुवम् ॥[1]

So, the rules are very strict. A *maṭhādhipati yati* should nurture Vaiṣṇava *dharma*, conduct daily worship of the Lord and Bhāgavatas and expound, establish and elaborate Vedāntas through discourses. He has to perform the four-month vow (*cāturmāsyavrata*). This vow should be begun on the Āṣāḍhapūrṇimā day. The rainy season begins from this month. During the rainy season, the roads and terrain will be infested with insects, and if the *saṁnyāsin* happens to travel during these months, he may incur the sin of killing these insects and worms. Hence it is ordained in the *śāstras* that the

1 See *Yatidharmasaṅgraha*, p. 133.

saṁnyāsin should reside in one place during these four months. The *cāturmāsyavrata saṅkalpa* runs as follows:

प्रायेण प्रावृषि प्राणिसंकुलं वर्त्म दृश्यते ।
अतस्तेषां अहिंसार्थं पक्षान् वै श्रुतिसंश्रयान् ।
स्थास्यामः चतुरो मासान् अत्रैवासति बाधके ॥

This *saṅkalpa* is vital for the vow and hence it is that it is termed *saṅkalpamahotsava*. In the Vedas, it is said that a month can be considered to be a fortnight (*pakṣa*) and hence nowadays, the *saṅkalpa* is observed for four fortnights only.[1]

This *vrata* begins with *Viṣvaksena ārādhana* and then *Bhūvarāha ārādhana* is conducted, followed by prayers offered to *Bhūdevi* requesting Her for forgiveness for digging the mud. This is collected for bath and cleansing purposes for this period. This is termed *mṛtsaṅgrahaṇam.*

From the mud thus collected, two big balls are offered to the old ascetic reciting a *mantra* and then they should be taken back from him reciting another *mantra*, meaning, "May this mud protect me".

Then, as formulated for the saṁnyāsins after *kṣaura*, *mahānadīsnāna*, *mādhyāhnika* duties and after worshipping *iṣṭadevatā* and *ācārya*, worship should be done with *kumbha* and chantings of *pañcaśāntimantras*; and then

1 *Śrī Nrisimha Priyā*, p. 11, August 1992.

the holy water should be sprinkled. Then the householders who live nearby should request the saṁnyāsin who has performed the *cāturmāsyasaṅkalpa* thus, "Thou shalt reside comfortably in this place. We are grateful to you, and on our part, we will serve you happily." Thus saying, coconuts should be offered to the *saṁnyāsin.*

निवसन्तु सुखेनात्र गमिष्यामः कृतार्थताम् ।
यथाशक्ति च शुश्रूषां करिष्यामो वयं मुदा ॥[1]

After these preliminary rites, worship of the Lord should be performed by the ascetic. During the final celebrations after finishing *kṣaura*, *mahānadīsnāna* and *anuṣṭhāna*, the remaining mud should be mixed with water and disposed of.[2]

The Jīyars of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha belong to the *paramahaṁsa* category of ascetics and have been carrying on this *saṁnyāsā* tradition with great fervour. With this, our interest shifts to the Śrīvaiṣṇavite Maṭha of great fame and antiquity - the Ahobila Maṭha and the line of pontiffs or Jīyars who have adorned this sacred Maṭha from its inception in 1398 A.D. to the present day.

1 *Yatidharmasaṅgraha*, p.140.

2 *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*, p. 12, August 1992.

CHAPTER III

JIYARS OF ŚRĪ AHOBILA MAṬHA

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

THE JĪYARS OF ŚRĪ AHOBILA MAṬHA

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

This chapter is devoted to the study of the lives of the holy saints who have decorated the Pontificate of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha. Starting with Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa till the present Pontiff Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika, 45 men of glory have occupied this position. The relevant biographical details are presented with a view to highlight the social, economic and political background in which they carried out their arduous task. The determination with which each and every Jīyar carried out the divine command of Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha by taking the Lord to the nooks and corners of the country in days of yore, when the transport and communication facilities were virtually non-existent, is to be appreciated.

1. *Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

According to the *ŚrīSannidhi-guru-parampará* also known as *Satsampradāyamuktāvali*,[1] Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar, the first Pontiff of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha was the son of Śrī Kiḍāmbi Keśavācārya of Tirunārāyaṇapuram (Melkote) in Karnataka. He was born on Thursday, the fifth day of the bright fortnight (*śuklapañcamī*) of the solar Tamil month

1 By Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra (33rd Pontiff) ; pub. K. Anantacharya, Madras, 1914.

Puraṭṭāsi in the cyclic year *Siddhārthi* current in the *śaka* year 1301 and *Kali* year 4480, corresponding to September 18, 1379 A.D.

Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar was named Śrīnivāsa with due reverence to the Lord of the Seven Hills. He received *pañcasaṁskāra* and early secular education at the feet of his father; and Ghaṭikāśatam Varadācārya (known also as Ghaṭikāśatam Ammāḷ)[1] of Kāñcī took charge of his spiritual education. Śrīnivāsa was fully instructed in both Vedāntic and Prabandhic lore and soon was acclaimed as a great exponent of Rāmānuja-darśana.

The event of his life was his dream – the vision of Lord Lakṣmī Narasiṁha of Ahobilam who beckoned him to Ahobilam where he was to renounce the world even as a Brahmacārin, and was later to be the founder of the great Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṭha. Śrīnivāsa, a scholar of hardly twenty years of age could not grasp the true implications of the dream and hence consulted his *ācārya* Ghaṭikāśatam Varadācārya who asked him to obey the mandate. So, in the prime of his life, he wended his way to Ahobilam with a few followers. Bathing in the holy river Bhavanāśinī and after performing his *nityānuṣṭhāna*, the young Śrīnivāsa started meditating on Lord Nṛsiṁha. Then the Lord

1 Ghaṭikāśatam Varadācārya - great grandson of Naḍādūr Ammāḷ (Vātsya Varadācārya) was known to be a prolific composer capable of composing a hundred verses in a *ghaṭikā* (Nāḻigai - 24 minutes). He was in charge of a *ghaṭikā* (centre of learning) in Kāñcī after his Ācārya, Brahma Tantra Svatantra Jīyar - I. The Ghaṭikā drew many illustrious learners. (*History of Śrīvaiṣṇavism in the Tamil Country* - [*Post-Rāmānuja*], p.134.)

appeared before him in the guise of an ascetic and Himself bestowed the robes of a saṁnyāsin on Śrīnivāsa,[1] administered in his ears the *preṣamantra*, ordained him into the ascetic order, offered him the *tridaṇḍa* and called him Śrī Śaṭhakopa Jīyar. The Lord revealed to him His real Self and nominated him to be His *Ārādhaka*, thenceforth bestowed the *Śaṅkha* and *Cakra* from His Divine hands and made this clear command: "Worshipping me, go to villages and towns, grant aspirants the sacred symbols, *mantras* and their significance. Accept their surrender and proceed to sustain the way of Viśiṣṭādvaita as expounded by Āḻvārs, Rāmānuja and Vedāntadeśika."[2] The Jīyar thus received the charter of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha from its progenitor Lord Nṛsiṁha Himself. This happened on the fifth day of the bright fortnight (*Śuklapañcamī*) *Puraṭṭāsi* month, *Bahudhānya* year (in the *Śaka* year 1301), exactly on his twentieth birthday (*tirunakṣatra*) – September 18, 1379 A.D. He stayed on in Ahobilam and started an organisation with a band of people possessing missionary zeal, called Ahobila Dāsaris who worked for the uplift of the hill tribes (*ceñcus*) living in and around Ahobilam.[3] An idol of Lord

1 *Śrī Sannidhiguruparamparā*, p. 21: अहोबिले श्रीनृसिंहः प्रेषमन्त्रं स्वयं ददौ।

2 *Śrī Sat Sampradāya Prakāśikā*, v. 8.
ग्रामे ग्रामे च गत्वा पदकमलनतान् मां गृहीत्वाभिरक्ष।

3 "Historical Evolution of Śrīvaiṣṇavism in South India" in *Cultural Heritage of India*. IV, p.182.

Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha came into his hands through His grace.[1] The nucleus of Śri Ahobila Maṭha may be said to have been laid with his becoming the custodian of worship and ritual in the temple at Ahobilam.

Dream seems to have been the medium through which Lord Nṛsiṁha communicated with the Jīyar. He was asked to proceed to Āḻvār Tiruṇagarī, the birth place of Nammāḻvār, on the banks of the Tāmraparṇi and pay obeisance to the Lord there. So, the Jīyar started his *divyadeśayātrā*, reached Āḻvār Tirunagarī where, to his dismay, he found that it was named Ekādaśarudra-kṣetra (housing eleven *liṅgas*). The idol of Nammāḻvār was retrieved from a nearby tank[2] by reciting the *Kaṇṇinuṇ Śiṛuttāmbu* (the *prabandha* by Madhurakavi Āḻvār). The local Śaivite Pāṇḍya king seems to have been converted to Śrīvaiṣṇavism and with his patronage, the idol of Nammāḻvār was consecrated and installed in the temple with due pomp and glory.[3] Thereupon it is said that the presiding deity of Āḻvār Tirunagarī

1 Purisai Naḍādūr Krishnamacarya, *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 232, Śri Viśiṣṭādvaita Research Centre.

2 *Śrī Sannidhi Guru Paramparā - Satsampradāya Muktāvali*, p. 23 by Śrī Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika, 33rd Jīyar of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha. The idol of Nammāḻvār is said to have come up from the waters to answer the call of the Jīyar even as the idol of Śelvapiḻḻai came towards Rāmānuja and sat on his lap in the palace of the Mohammedan King at Delhi.

3 No dates are given in the *Śrī Sannidhi Guru Paramparā*, p.24. and also no name is given to the Pāṇḍya King. In 1400 A.D. or so, when this event happened the Pāṇḍya chiefs held sway over these parts of Tirunelveli district. From Robert Sewell's list of South Indian dynasties, we can cull out one Kulaśekhara Pāṇḍya as the reigning chief.

conferred on him the title Vaṇ (powerful) Śaṭhakopa and Nammāḷvār added the epithet Ādi (first). Henceforth the Jīyars have always had the prefix - "Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa" . The Jīyar also built a shrine for Vedāntadeśika there. He received the *haṁsamudrā* from Nammāḷvār himself as a *pāritoṣika* (gift) for the services rendered by him. The *haṁsamudrā* remains even to this day, the official seal of the Ahobila Maṭha and is affixed in all correspondences of the Pontiffs. The Jīyārs sign as "Śrī Śaṭhakopa Śrī" and the following are some of their titles: Śrīmad Vedamārga Pratiṣṭhāpanācārya Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya, Sarvatantra Svatantra, Ubhayavedāntācārya, Śrī Bhagavad Rāmānuja Siddhāntanirdhāraṇa Sārvabhauma,[1] etc. Even to this day the air resounds with this sound of these titles chanted aloud by the sisyas of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha wherever and whenever the Jīyar goes out in processions.

The Jīyar's services were commemorated by the local chief by the installation of the Jīyar's idol in a shrine built to the west of Nammāḷvār's shrine within the temple. The Jīyars of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha are entitled to the "*Mudal* (first) *Tīrtham*", "*Śrī Śaṭhāri*" and other respects due in the temple.

1 Reference is made in a work entitled the *Padyaprāthamyavāda* (cf. p.241 of *Ācārya Vaibhavam*) to a dialogue through the medium of an *arcaka* that took place between Nammaḷvār and the Jīyar wherein the former is said to have cleared certain doubts of the latter. To cite a couple of doubts: (a) If *parokṣaśruti* and *pratyakṣarūpa bhagavadājñā* are opposed to each other, what has to be followed? (b) What is to be done if an individual has to perform an *aṅgin* opposed to the *aṅga* of his *varṇāśrama dharma*?

The Jīyar then returned to Ahobilam and placed the *haṁsa-mudrā* at the feet of Lord Nṛsiṁha who blessed him and is said to have ordained him to be the tutelary head of the 74 *siṁhāsanādhipatis* nominated by Rāmānuja.[1]

The incident in the Pāṇḍya king's life finds a parallel in the life of the King of Orissa, Mukunda Devarāya by name, who was driven out of his kingdom by the Mohammedans. He resorted to the feet of the Jīyar and with the latter's help was able to regain his lost kingdom. As a mark of gratitude and respect, King Mukunda Devarāya made a grant of *chattra, cāmara, bherī, mṛdaṅga*, elephants, horses and retinue to the Jīyar. He also ordered an artistic palanquin of ivory to be made for the Jīyar, in which he was taken out in procession. (This ivory palanquin is in vogue even today and after the *paṭṭābhiṣekam* of a new Jīyar, he is given the honour of being carried in this palanquin, in a procession.) Reference is made to this incident by the seventh

1 These events are testified by the term "ஆழ்வார்தம் கிருபையான அம்ச முத்திரை வாழியே" and the following *śloka* recited by the ancestors:

श्रीरामानुजसम्प्रदायपदवीभाजां चतुस्सप्ततिः
श्रीमद्वैष्णवभूभृतां गुणभृतां सिंहासनास्थायिनाम् ।
अध्यक्षत्वमुपेयिवांसमतुलं श्रीमन्नृसिंहाह्वया
प्राच्यं वण्शठकोपसंयमिधराधौरेयमीडीमहि ॥

(*Śrī Sannidhi Guru Paramparā*, pp. 34-35).

Jīyar of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha in his Sanskrit play, the *Vāsantikā Pariṇayam*, thus : [1]

पूर्वं यस्तु मुकुन्ददेवविभुना स्कन्धे धृतान्दोलिकः
प्राप्तः श्रीपुरुषोत्तमं रचितवान् भक्तप्रतिष्ठापनम् ।
लब्ध्वा दन्तितुरङ्गरत्नशिबिकाच्छत्रद्वयीचामर-
द्वन्द्वादीनि ययौ पुनश्च विजयी कर्णाटसिंहासनम् ॥

The Jīyar then proceeded to Puruṣottamapurī (modern Pūri) where he gave discourses on Rāmānuja-siddhānta and defeated many Advaita pandits in debates.[2] Thus he was able to secure a large number of followers and ordered the installation of the images of Nammāḻvār and Rāmānuja in the temple at Pūrī.

1 By Śaṭhakopa III, 7th Jīyar, ed. by Narasimha Sastri, pub. Vidyatarangini Press, Mysore, 1912 (Telugu characters).

2 The *Ahobilam* Inscription of Śrīraṅga Rāya dated 1584-85 says that Śrī Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmi III, the 7th Jīyar of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha who had installed the idol of Śrīvaiṣṇava Āḻvārs at Jagannath approached King Śrīraṅga Rāya and asked for the restoration of the District to its original condition by recovering it from Muslims. From the Inscription it seems that one Mukunda Harichandra of Orissa was a contemporary of this Jīyar. The idea of the installation of Āḻvār idols at Pūri is corroborated by the play *Vāsantikā Pariṇayam* (see S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, pp. 233-234). This takes the 7th Jīyar to the end of the 16th century A.D. B.V. Rāmānujam believes in the contemporaneity of Ṣaṣṭha Parāṅkuśa (6th Jīyar) and Aliya Rāma Rāya and Sadāsiva Rāya on the strength of the *Satsampradāya Muktāvali*. As these arguments are fairly conclusive, the traditional dates assigned to some of the Jīyars may have to be post-dated. But S.N. Venkatesa Iyer has "thought it best to stick to the *Śrī Sannidhi Guru Paramparā* as the safest course with our present imperfect knowledge of the times" (*History of Ahobila Maṭha*, p.19).

The Guruparamparā then takes us from Orrisa to the capital of the Karnataka kingdom, presumably Vijayanagar, where the Jīyar stayed for sometime enjoying the patronage of the local king.[1] It states that the Jīyar met one *Maṇalpākkam Toḷappar* who learnt all the *Śāstras* from the Jīyar. Impressed by Toḷappar's quick mastery of all *Śāstras*, the Jīyar asked him to write *dharma śāstra* digests for Śrīvaiṣṇavas. In accordance with the Jīyar's wish he wrote eight works - *Gṛhyaratnam*, *Kaṇṭhabhūṣaṇam*, *Smṛtiratnākara*, *Pitṛmedhasāra*, and its commentary *Sudhīvilocanam*, *Daśaniṛnaya*, *Āśaucaśatakam*, and *Āśaucaniṛṇaya*. He was conferred the title of *Vaidika Sārvabhauma* by the Jīyar.

The Jīyar then toured Kumbhakoṇam, Śrīraṅgam and Āḻvār Tirunagarī doing *maṅgalāśāsana* to the deities in the *divyadeśas*, administering *pañcasaṁskāra* and accepting *śaraṇāgati* of the devotees, and finally he reached his birth-place, Tirunārāyaṇapuram (Melkote). There, two important events are said to have taken place: (a) The presence of a five-hooded serpent as one of the audience during *Śrībhāṣya-pravacana* of the Jīyar, and (b) the

1 We are not given any details regarding the date or name of the King.

installation of Vedāntadeśika's image in the temple precincts[1] and the renovation of the temple Gopuram. The holy trinity of Śrīvaiṣṇavite worship and pilgrim centres: (a) the Periya Kovil at Śrīraṅgam, (b) Perumāḷ Kovil at Kāñcī and (c) Tiruveṅkaṭam - Tirumala, must have demanded the Jīyar's attention. He ordered the construction of the *Sopāna* (steps) leading to Tirumalai Hill. Several rest houses and maṭhas were constructed on the wayside and arrangements were made for their maintenance. Evidence of the Jīyar's influence and of these permanent arrangements can be seen in the Tirumala Tirupati Inscriptions of 1516, 1546 and 1556 A.D. These Inscriptions along with the Ahobilam Inscriptions go to prove the Jīyar's organisational capabilities. Enough to say that the influence of the Maṭha at Tirumala abides to this day; such is the strength of the foundation laid by this Jīyar.

Then came the divine call from Kañcī, the place of the Jīyar's early education. Here, he ordered the construction of a massive hundred-pillared *maṇṭapa* and a *kalyāṇamaṇṭapam* for seating the Lord Varadarāja and Perundevi Tāyār during *utsava* days. Evidence of this contribution can be

1 Refer *Commemoration Volume* published on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the coronation of H.H. the 44th Aḷagiya Siṅgar. Śrī Rāmānuja is believed to have been the incarnation of Ādiśeṣa who appeared as five-hooded serpent and nodded approval during the Jīyar's exposition of Śrī Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya*. This led to the second event namely, the *punarnirmāṇa* of the *gopuram* at Tirunārāyaṇapuram and installation of Vedānt
at Āḻvār Tirunagari.

seen in a pillar of the *maṇṭapam*, wherein is sculptured Lord Nṛsiṁha and facing the Lord is sculptured Śrī Āḍivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī in another pillar. He stayed for sometime here and gave discourses on *Grantha-catuṣṭayam* viz. the *Śrībhāṣya*, the *Gītābhāṣya*, the *Bhagavad-viṣayam* and the *Śrīmad Rahasyatrayasāra*. Here he chanced to meet Udayabhānumiśra, a rich Advaitin from Bengal. This meeting resulted in a challenge to the superiority of the rival systems. The discussions started as usual with the preliminary wager of the loser embracing the religion of the winner. The Jīyar took recourse to the *Śatadūṣaṇī* of Vedāntadeśika and defeated his opponent. Udayabhānumiśra surrendered at the Jīyar's feet and embraced Śrīvaiṣṇavism, had his *pañca-saṁskāra* at the Jīyar's hands and offered all his wealth at the Jīyar's feet. This wealth was utilised for the construction of buildings at Kāñcī and a separate temple for Vedāntadeśika, *maṇṭapas* etc. However, nothing more is heard of this Udayabhānumiśra.

The Jīyar then proceeded to Sholinghur expounding the philosophy of Rāmānuja. He met the grandfather of Doḍḍayācārya[1] who learnt his lessons at the feet of this Jīyar. Pleased by the sincerity of his devotion, the Jīyar ordained him to take charge of the temple affairs at Sholinghur. It is a well

1 Doḍḍayācārya alias Doḍḍa Aiyaṇgār Appan alias Śrīnivāsa alias Mahācārya lived perhaps in the 15th century A.D. Vide N. Jagadeesan, *History of Śrivaiṣṇavism in the Tamil Country*, p. 26.

known fact that the Doḍḍayācārya family, in keeping with the Jīyar's orders is entitled for "mudal tīrtham" and other temple honours till this day.

After worshipping Rāmānuja at Śrīperumbūdūr, the Jīyar proceeded to Śrīraṅgam. He was accorded a royal welcome with full temple honours, as a fitting climax, to half a century of strenuous toil of propagating the *sampradāya*. Here too, the Jīyar took upon himself the task of building the temple *prākāra*-walls (as was done in the past by Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār). In the northern entrance of Śrīraṅgam temple, he built a Maṭha and installed an image of Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha (and later the Jīyar's image was also installed). He also built a frontal *maṇṭapa* for the Daśāvatārasannidhi at the northern suburb of Śrīraṅgam beyond the temple walls and installed the image of Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār. The idol of Vedāntadeśika was also duly consecrated in front of the Śrīraṅganācciyār *sannidhi* inside the temple precincts, and arrangements were made for the daily worship there. In fact, the Jīyar himself stayed for sometime there and carried on the activities of the Maṭha. In the *Uttara* street at Śrīraṅgam, a big Maṭha was constructed (near the eastern gate of the temple) and Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha was installed. Having thus given fixity and method to the Maṭha activities and arranged for its continuance, the Jīyar felt himself called upon to proceed to Melkote and perform worship of Lord Tirunārāyaṇa.

Here at his birth place, he consecrated the image of Vedāntadeśika, built a Maṭha and personally attended to the rituals of worship. The Jīyar was at this time, advanced in age and felt that his end was approaching.

With his usual great care and foresight, he selected Nampākkam Kṛṣṇamācārya Śvāmī, the 'Abhinava Vedāntadeśika' as his successor. He bequeathed the saṁnyāsin's robes and performed *preṣamantropadeśa* to him and named him Śrī Nārāyaṇa Jīyar and installed him as the second pontiff of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha. When we recapitulate the achievements of the Jīyar who had founded a great Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṭha and who, through his ceaseless peregrinations spread Rāmānuja-darśana far and wide, taking innumerable *śiṣyas* within his solacing fold, one cannot but marvel at the intensity of his devotion, determination of purpose, and his great organisational capability, next only to Rāmānuja himself.

The first Jīyar breathed his last at Melkote on Saturday, 11th day (Ekādaśī) of dark fortnight (*kṛṣṇapakṣa*) of Caitra month, Bahudhānya year, Kaliyuga 4560 equating to April 1458 A.D. His Brindāvan is at Melkote on the banks of Kalyāṇī Puṣkariṇī, an object of reverential worship for his numerous followers. His praises are being duly sung in beautiful verses (Aḻagiyasiṅgar Pugaḻ Mālai).

His Taniyans (composed by the second Jīyar) are read as under:

प्रपद्ये निरवद्यानां निषद्यां गुणसंपदाम्।
शरणं भवभीतानां शठकोपमुनीश्वरम्॥
केशवार्यकृपापात्रं धीशमादिगुणार्णवम्।
श्रीशठारियतीशानं देशिकेन्द्रमहं भजे॥

The First Jīyar in Contemporary Literature and Epigraphical Records

The accounts gleaned from the *Guruparamparās* do not furnish us with any reliable chronological or historical data. But we have satisfactory evidence in contemporary liter- ature and epigraphs which help us fix the times of the Jīyars.

Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar was the most revered scholar of his times. Many resorted to his feet for spiritual guidance. Maṇavāḷa Māmuni (1370-1443 A.D.) who is said to be an incarnation of Śrī Rāmānuja resorted to his feet and obtained *preṣamantropadeśa* and *saṁnyāsāśrama* from the first Jīyar. His other students were Yatirāja Jīyar, Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Jīyar, and Ācci Tiruveṅkaṭācārya.[1]

The famous Telugu poet who adorned the court of King Kṛṣṇadevarāya of Vijayanagar, Allāsāni Peddanna (1509-1530 A.D) is said to

1 Pinbaḻagiya Perumāḷ Jīyar, *Ārāyirappaḍi Guruparamparā-prabhāvam*, p. 597.

have had his literary training under one Śaṭhakopa Yati.[1] He refers to this in his works like the *Harikathāsāra* and the *Manucaritramu*. Of these the first is not extant now and only a few verses from it are quoted in the *Ānandaraṅgacampū*.[2] He mentions in his *Manucaritramu* that Śaṭhakopa Yati was his *guru* and discribes him as an asylum of learning and dispeller of the darkness of ignorance through the moonlight of his kind looks.[3] However, since Āḍivaṇ Śaṭhakopa flourished between 1379-1458 A.D. and also since the period of Peddanna is accepted by many scholars to be between 1480-1533 A.D. it appears that the Śaṭhakopa he refers to could not have been the first Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha. He is in all probability the seventh pontiff of the Maṭha whose pontificate is fixed approximately between 1513 and 1522 A.D.

The *T.T.D. Epigraphical Report* says that the famous music composer, *Taḷḷapākam Annamācārya* (1424-1503 A. D.) was a contemporary of the first

1 K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *History of South India*, p. 412.

2 Śālva Krishnamurthy, *Peddanna's Concept of Poetry*, Introduction, p.8. शठकोपयतिकि शठतरु ...

3 Cf. Suryanarayana Sastri's edition of *Manucharitramu*, pp. 7-8 for a tribute to Śaṭhakopayati:

कोलुतुन् मद्गुरु विद्या, निलयुन् करुणाकटाक्ष निबिडज्योत्स्ना-
दलिताश्रितजनदुरितच्छलगाढध्वान्तसमिति शठकोपयतिन् ॥

He is also said to have obtained a village Kokaṭa (in Cuddapah District) as a gift from Emperor Kṛṣṇadevarāya. Critics say that he renamed it Śaṭhakopapura in honour of his *guru* and gave it away to Śrīvaiṣṇavas. Cf. *Peddanna's Concept of Poetry*, p. 8.

Jīyar. The songs of this famous composer inscribed on copper plates were found hidden in the underground cellars of the upper Ahobilam temple.[1] One song reads as follows:[2]

चूडुडिंदरकु सुलभुडु हरि तोडु नीड यगु दोरमुनि यितडु
कैवल्यमुनकु गनकपु दापल त्रोवै श्रुतुलकु दुदिपदमै
पावन मोक रूपमै विरजकु नावै युन्नाडिदे यितडु
कापाडग लोकमुलकु सुज्ञान दीपमै जगतिकि देजमै
पापालडपग भवपयोधुलकु तेपै युन्नाडिदे यीतडु
करुणानिधिकि रंगपतिकि गांचीवरुनकु वेंकटगिरिपतिकि
निरतिनहोबल नृकेसरिकि तत्परुडगु शठकोपमुनि यितडु

The Jīyar was a disciple of Nainārācārya the apostolic head from 1371 - 1410 A.D. Maṇavāḷa Māmuni (1370 - 1442 A.D.), Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Aiyangār and the first, second and third Brahma Tantra Svatantra Jīyars of Parakāla Maṭha are said to have been the other contemporaries of the Jīyar.

Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Aiyangār, a disciple of Aḷagiya Maṇavāḷa Jīyar and super- intendent of the free feeding house (Rāmānuja Kūṭam) at Tirumala

1 S.K. Sarasvathi, "Art and Architecture in Vijayanagar", *Epigraphical Report*, p. 280.

2 "Behold! this is our revered Śaṭhakopa Muni who is easily accessible to all and to whom Lord Hari Himself is the guide and refuge! He is our golden path for final beatitude, the last word in scriptures, the soul pure and free from sin and the boat with which to cross the Virajā river. He is the divine lamp of wisdom illuminating all the worlds, the redeemer of sins and the raft which enables us to cross this ocean of *saṁsāra*. He is an ardent devotee of the presiding deities of Śrīraṅgam, Kāñcī, Veṅkaṭādri and Ahobilam and is a prince among ascetics!"

is mentioned in some Inscriptions.[1] This enables us to fix the date of the Jīyar in the second half of the 15th century A.D. Two other Inscriptions mentioning this Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Aiyangār are found at Śrī Raṅganātha temple, Śrīraṅgam.[2] They mention one Kandāḍai Mādhava Aiyaṅgār as his disciple.

The first three Brahmatantra Svatantra Jīyars had been the heads of the Parakāla Maṭha. The date of the *āsthāna* of the first Jīyar is from 1364 - 1386 A.D.[3] As per the Kāñcī Inscription dated in Śaka 1282 (29th March 1360 A.D.) he was the pontiff of the Maṭha.[4] He was a direct disciple of Vedāntadeśika and Nainārācārya along with the first Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha.

Sāḷuva Narasiṁha was a feudal king of Chandragiri who later extended his control over North Arcot, South Arcot and Chingleput districts, and finally usurped the throne of Vijayanagar.[5] He is said to have installed the

1 *T. T. D. Inscriptions* Vol. I Serial No. 4 of Śaka 1378 (corresponding to 12th September 1456 A.D.) and No. 23 dated Śaka 1387 (corresponding to 14th April 1465 A.D.) of Sāluva Narasiṁha's regime.

2 A.R. 92 - 1936 - 37 (South Indian Inscription XXIV, No: 357, 355) and A.R. 41 1938 - 39 p. 363 and dated Śaka 1422 (1500 A.D.).

3 See the succession list of the pontiffs of Śrī Brahma Tantra Svatantra Prakāla Maṭha - "The origin and History of Parakāla Maṭha" by K. Desikachary, p. 23.

4 A.R. 318 / 1909.

5 *T.T.D. Inscriptions*, Vol II, s.no.82 (G.T. No. 272), p. 151.

image of Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha on the pathway to Śeṣādri. A few other Inscriptions are found to relate to the period of the first Jīyar.

An Inscription[1] on a slab set up in a garden near Āḻvār Cheruvu (tank) in Tirupati, Chittoor District, refers to the building of Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha Maṇṭapa and laying out of a flower garden. It is dated in Śaka 1326 (1404 A.D.). It may be the Vaṇ Śaṭhakopan Nandavanam mentioned in a T.T.D. Inscription.

The second Inscription[2] in Tamil on the western wall of the second *prākāra* in the Tirumala temple is the record of a *Śilāśāsana* which contains among other things a provision that the balance of offerings be made to Aḻagiya Śiṅgar, his Ācārya, Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar. This is dated Śaka 1415 (15th June 1493 A.D.) when Sāḻuva Narasiṁha was ruling Vijayanagar. The above Inscription is particularly important for two things: The Jīyar was called Aḻagiya Śiṅgar and a disciple had endowed to perpetuate the memory of his Ācārya.

The third Inscription dated Śaka 1407 (6th June 1485 A.D.) records the execution of a *Śilāśāsana*. It gives the information that Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar constructed the entrance of the Vasanta Maṇṭapa with stone through the

1 *T.T.D. Inscriptions*, Vol I, p. 457 and *A.R.* 258 - 1904.
2 Ibid. Vol. II, No. 70.

utilisation of the income of Tiruviḍaiyāṭṭam (village) Pūngōḍu but left the stone roof over the maṇṭapa unfinished. The *narpaṇam* of 2000 *paṇams* which the donor paid was to cover the value of verandah work. It also details the festivals when the processional deities shall be taken to this *maṇṭapa*. As S.K. Iyengar observes, this Inscription proves the first Jīyar's activity in Tirupati, the construction of a *maṇṭapa*, the establishment of his reputation as an Ācārya and the building up of a devoted following in the temple town.

We also hear of Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Maṇṭapa in two other Inscriptions, one occuring at Tirumala[1] dated Śaka 1427 (1.3.1505 A.D.) and one dated Śaka 1429 (4th October 1508 A.D.).[2] K.V. Raman refers to an Inscription in Kāñcī Varadarāja temple dated Śaka 1431 (1509 A.D.) mentioning the gift of a land in a village Vaṇ Śaṭhakopapuram, named evidently after the first Jīyar.[3]

An Inscription in Kāñcī Varadarāja Temple dated 14.1.1517 A.D. mentions that King Kṛṣṇadevarāya visited Kāñcī in the course of his conquests, worshipped Lord Varadarāja and donated 1000 *varāhas* and granted certain villages for provisions of offerrings to the deity with the stipulation that the balance of offerings be utilised for distribution among the disciples of Śaṭhakopa Jīyar. This shows that the first Jīyar had established a

1 *T.T.D. Inscriptions*. Vol II, No: 276.
2 Ibid. Vol II, No. 11.
3 Ibid. 411.(1919)

Maṭha at Kāñcī and that his name was held in high esteem by King Kṛṣṇadevarāya. The Inscription[1] in the Govindarāja temple in Tirupati dated Śaka 1450 (November 1528 A.D.) mentions a *nandavana* (flower garden) called Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Nandavanam.

Two Inscriptions are found in Śrī Raṅganāthasvāmī temple, Śrīraṅgam. They mention King Kṛṣṇadevarāya's visit to Śrīraṅgam and a provision for the distribution of a share of offerings to the disciples of Śaṭhakopa Jīyar Maṭha at Śrīraṅgam. All these are unmistakable attestations to the fame and popularity of the first Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha.

The history of the Ācāryas of the Ahobila Maṭha who succeeded Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī is dealt with in the following pages. Lord Nṛsiṁha is referred to in Tamil as "Aḻagia Siṅgam" or "the Beautiful Lion". As a natural corollary, the Ācāryās of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha who propogated the worship of Lord Nṛsiṁha are referred to as "Aḻagia Siṅgars".

2. *Śrī Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

Tirumalai Nampākkam Kṛṣṇamācārya, one of the disciples of the first Jīyar, succeeded him in the pontificate on the fifth lunar day of the bright half of Caitra in the year Bahudhānya in Kaliyuga 4560 (corresponding to Friday.

1 *T.T.D. Inscriptions*, Vol III, G.T. No. 275.

9th April 1458 A.D.). He was born in the Tamil month Āvaṇi under star Jyeṣṭhā. He was an erudite scholar and was the author of several works in his *pūrvāśrama*. He is well known as the "author of sixty works" (*Ṣaṣṭi-prabandhanirmātā*).[1] Chief among his works are the *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad vyākhyā*, *Puruṣārthasudhānidhi*, *Rahasyatrayajīvāttu*, *Rahasyatrayavicāra*, *Tiruvārādhanakrama*, *Nyāsadaśakavyākhyā*, *Yajus-sandhyāvandana-bhāṣya* and *Nyāsavimśativyākhyā*. He is also known as "Abhinava Vedāntadeśika." The *Śrī Śannidhi Guruparamparā* ascribes the *Puruṣakāra-mīmāṁsā*, to this Jīyar.[2]

This Jīyar presided over the Maṭha for a period of fourteen years. He established an *agrahāram* at Madhuramaṅgalam. He installed an image of his Ācārya Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar in the temple at Melkote (Tirunārāyaṇapuram) and another in the Svāmī's Bṛndāvanam at Melkote.

1 V.K.S.N. Raghavan, *History of Viśiṣṭādvaita Literature*, Ajanta Publications, 1979. pp. 54-55.

2 *Śrī Sannidhi Guruparamparā*, pp. 49-50. It is a treatise on the principles of mediation required for salvation. It was in two parts viz. *pūrvapakṣa* and *siddhānta*. It is said that some scholars, for reasons not disclosed, took away the *siddhānta* portion and kept it out of circulation. Further, it is stated that the elder Vedānta Rāmānuja Svāmī learnt the *siddhānta* portion of it from his Ācārya and later wrote works like *Śrītattvasiddhāñjana* based on this treatise. But recent researches have identified the author of this work as the fourteenth Jīyar.

During his pontificate, the Jīyar travelled throughout South India. He visited Śrīraṅgam, Śrīmuṣṇam, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Tirukkovalūr, Kāñcī and its eighteen satellite *divyadeśas*, and proceeded *via* Colasiṁhapuram and Tirumala, to Ahobilam. He spent the rest of his life giving discourses to his devotees on the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy.

He attained Ācāryan Tiruvaḍi (liberation) at Tirunārāyaṇapuram in the year Nandana, in the Tamil month of Paṅguni, on Kṛṣṇapakṣa Dvitīyā tithi (March 1473). His Bṛndāvanam is located at Kalyāṇi Tīrtha at Melkote, beside that of his Ācārya.

His Taniyan reads as follows:-

श्रीशठारियतीशानपदपङ्कजषट्पदम् ।
श्रीमन्नारायणमुनिं श्रये श्रीभाष्यदेशिकम् ॥

The Second Jīyar in Epigraphical Records

The second Jīyar appears in a few Inscriptions and these help us to fix his chronology. Two Tirupati Inscriptions[1] falling within the reign of Kṛṣṇadevarāya give him a specific date. One of these occurring in the Govindarāja shrine in Lower Tirupati is a benefaction for the first Jīyar on his birthday (Puraṭṭāsi-Keṭṭai) the donor being Nārāyaṇa Jīyar himself. It is in both Tamil and Grantha. Therein, provision was made for five food services

1 *T.T.D. Inscriptions*, Vol. III No. 110 (60 of G.T.) and 114 (160 of G.T.) p. 240.

during the *adhyayana utsava*, performed for the Lord of Seven Hills and for thirteen other services on the monthly star of his Ācārya.[1]

The other Inscription[2] dated Śaka 1438 (7th November 1516 A.D.) refers to the deposit of 3800 *paṇams* to be invested for the improvement of irrigation sources and the interest income thereof to be utilised for daily services in the Govindarāja temple. These Inscriptions show that the second Jīyar took certain steps to perpetuate the memory of his illustrious Ācārya by instituting services in his memory in the famous shrines at Tirupathi and Śrīraṅgam and popularising his Maṭha and carrying forward the work of propagation of *Rāmānuja-darśana.*

A third Inscription[3] pertaining to this Jīyar is found in the South wall of the central shrine of Periyāḻvār temple at Alipiri. It records the execution of a *Śilāśāsana* in favour of the disciples of Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Jīyar for providing a certain offering in the Jīyar's *nandavana* (flower garden).

Regarding the date 1516 A.D., S.K Aiyangār[4] observes: "It is not given by way of a mere indirect reference but is the date of an actual record

1 A similar provision for taking out the deity at Śrīraṅgam on Jyeṣṭhā asterism day was made by Kṛṣṇadevarāya during his visit to Śrīraṅgam in 1517 A.D.

2 *T.T.D. Inscriptions*, Vol. III. No. 114, p. 240.

3 Ibid. No. 178, pp. 364-65.

4 *History of Tirupati*, Vol. II, p. 175.

made by the Svāmī himself and must have been put on record necessarily under his orders and it may even be under his supervision and hence could not be brushed aside." K.V. Raman[1] says that Nārāyaṇa Jīyar lived almost to the end of Kṛṣṇadevarāya's reign (1500-1529 A.D.).

If we are to accept these dates occuring in the Inscription as falling within the pontificate of Nārāyaṇa Jīyar, it is necessary to make an adjustment by putting up the dates of the Jīyars by about sixty years.[2] The dates assigned to the Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha are based on dates provided by the *Śri Sannidhi Guruparampará*. These dates, though disputed, are still given so that there may be a general chronological background for an account of the Jīyars.

3. *Śrī Parāṅkuśa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Jīyar was born in Malayāṅkuḷam agrahāram in the Kāñcīpuram District in the Tamil month of Thai under the asterism of Śravaṇa. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Kandāḍai Kṛṣṇayajvā, indicating that the Svāmī performed many *yāgas*. He assumed the office of pontificate on a full-moon day in Nandana year in the Tamil month of Paṅguni, corresponding to March 1473.

1 *Varadarājasvāmī Temple at Kāñcī*, p.76

2 V.S Seshadri, *History of Vaiṣṇavism from Vedic Times to the end of 16th century A.D.*, p. 263.

He ably carried forward the work of his two illustrious predecessors. He proceeded from Tirunārāyaṇapuram to Kāñcī where he performed maṅgalāśāsana to Lord Varadarāja and Perundevi Tāyār. He gave religious and philosophic discourses to learned scholars on the *Śrībhāṣya* and other texts.

He established *agrahārams* at Nīrvaḷūr, Uragaḍam, Nimmili, Kāḍaṅgarai and Kaḷattūr. Then he proceeded to Tirukkovalūr, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Śrīmuṣṇam and Śrīraṅgam. He stayed for sometime at Śrīraṅgam giving discourses on *Grantha-catuṣṭayam.* At the divine command of Rāmānuja he proceeded to Śrīmuṣṇam to worship the Lord Bhūvarāha. Having spent a worthwhile life, full of service to his *pūrvācāryas* and Lord Nṛsiṁha, the Svāmī attained Ācāryan Tiruvaḍi in the Tamil Month of Thai, Krodhi year (January 1485) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa caturdaśī. His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrīmuṣṇam. He occupied the pontificate for eleven years and ten months.

His Taniyan reads as follows:

श्रीमन्नाराणमुनेः पदपङ्कजषट्पदम्।
परार्धगुणसम्पन्नं पराङ्कुशमुनिं भजे॥

4. *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Jīyar was born in the Tamil Month of Mārgaḷi under the star Citrā. He assumed office in the Tamil Month of Thai in the Krodhi year corresponding to January 1485 at Śrīmuṣṇam.

This svāmī proceeded on his religous tours (*sañcāra*) from *Śrīmuṣṇam* to Śiṅgarkoil where he gave discourses on Ubhayavedānta texts. He then left for North India via Ahobila to Dvārakā, Gokulam, Mathurā, Avantī(Ujjain) and Ayodhyā and returned to Śiṅgarkoil via Kāñcī. Due to his failing health this Svāmī prayed to Lord Nṛsiṁha to relieve him of his mortal frame, after appointing a suitable successor. Complying to the Svāmī's fervent prayer, Lord Nṛsiṁha appeared in the dream of a certain scholar (who was called "*Sarvatantrasvatantra*" in due recognition of his knowledge of all *śāstras*) and commanded him to proceed to Śiṅgarkoil to don the ochre robes. Accordingly, he proceeded to the Ahobila Maṭha at Śiṅgarkoil where the divine command was intimated to the Jīyar. It was thus that the fifth Jīyar[1] was initiated into asceticism with the title of "*Sarvatantra svatantra Śaṭhakopa Jīyar*". Subsequently, the elder Svāmī attained *paramapada* in the Tamil month of Citra in the year Pramādīca on Kṛṣṇapakṣa caturthī (April

1 V.S. Seshadri, *History of Vaiṣṇavism from Vedic Times to the end of 16th Century A.D.*, p. 264: "When the Jīyar found that the Śrīvaiṣṇavasvāmī was of Teṅgalai sect he wanted to admit him into the Vaḍakalai fold, but the latter was not willing for a second initiation. The Jīyar having no other option, admitted him into the ascetic order and nominated him as the next pontiff, with the stipulation that the practices pertaining to both the traditions be followed in the Maṭha". However, no such reference is found in the Śrī Sannidhi Guruparamparā. According to T.A. Swaminatha Aiyar (Ācārya Carittira Mālā - Appendix), the first eleven chiefs of the Maṭha (Parakāla Maṭha) were subject to Śrī Ahobila Maṭha because the Parakāla Maṭha tradition includes the recitation of certain Taniyans peculiar to the Ahobila Maṭha. See N. Jagadeesan, *History of Śrīvaiṣṇavism in the Tamil Country (Post-Rāmānuja)*, p.159.

1493). His Bṛndāvanam is at Śingarkoil and he was in the pontificate for eight years and three months (1485-1493 A.D.).

His Taniyan reads as follows:-

श्रीपराङ्कुशयोगीन्द्रचरणाम्बुजषट्पदम् ।
श्रीनिवासमुनिं वन्दे श्रीभाष्यामृतसागरम् ॥

5. ***Kaṇḍalūr Śrī Sarvatantrasvatantra Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Jīyar was born in the Tamil month of Kārtigai under the star Kṛttikā in Ātreya Gotra. He assumed the pontificate in the year Pramādīca in Citra month (April 1493) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa dvitīyā tithi.

An erudite scholar, well-borne out by his title "*Sarvatantrasvatantra*", his discourses on religion and philosophy were most sought after by the Śrīvaiṣṇava community. He visited Śrīraṅgam and Tirumala, propagating *Rāmānuja-darśana* and proceeded to the North. He attained Ācāryan Tiruvaḍi in the year Kāḷayukti in the month of Thai (January 1499) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa navamī Tithi, on the banks of river Kṛṣṇā. His Bṛndāvanam is also situated there. He ruled over the pontificate for five years and nine months (1493 - 1499).[1]

1 The *Śrī Sannidhi Guruparamparā* mentions that upto the period of this Jīyar there was cordial inter-mingling between the *Vaḍakalai* and *Teṅgalai* sects of the *Śrīvaiṣṇava* community. P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāryar, in his *History of Rāmānuja Darśanam*, p. 34 holds that the Ahobila Maṭha originally followed the *Teṅgalai* tradition but was later on converted to *Vaḍakalai* tradition.

His Taniyan reads as follows:

श्रीनृसिंहदयापात्रं परवादिगजाङ्कुशम्।
सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रार्यं शठकोपमुनिं भजे॥

Epigraphical Records

The T.T.D. Epigraphical Report mentions one Vedānta Śaṭhakopa Jīyar as the fifth pontiff who presided over the Ahobila Maṭha during the reign of Sadāśivarāya.

From the two Inscriptions in Lower Tirupati[1] we understand that the Jīyar was the spiritual *guru* of the Nandyala royal family. This information is also contained in two other Inscriptions[2] wherein it is stipulated that the donor's share of the offering (*prasāda*), be made over to their Ācārya.

The T.T.D. Epigraphical Report also states, "this is the same Vedānta Śaṭhakopa Jīyar who regained for Gajapati king, Mukunda Devarāya, his lost kingdom."

6. *Śrī Ṣaṣṭha Parāṅkuśa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Jīyar was born in the Tamil month of Thai under star Pūraṭṭādi in Karalappākkam village near Tiruvallūr in Bharadvāja Gotra. In his *pūrvāśrama* days, he was well-known in literary circles as Vidvān Vaṅgīpuram Veṅkaṭācārya Svāmī.

1 *T.T.D. Inscriptions*, Vol. VII, p. 278.

2 Ibid. No. 65 and No. 122.

Pañcamatabhañjanam Tātācārya[1] of Kāñcī was his cousin. He received the Pañca- saṁskāra at the hands of Ṣaṣṭha Parāṅkuśa Jīyar. He was appointed as the Śrīkāryam (Secretary) of the Ahobila Maṭha to look after administrative and financial matters of the Maṭha.

This Jīyar was a famous personage of his times. Being well grounded in *Jñāna* and *Anuṣṭhāna*, he had a large number of followers and many resorted to His Holy Feet for *pañcasaṁśkāra* and *prapatti*.

Ṣaṣṭha Parāṅkuśa was a contemporary of King Sadāśiva Rāya according to the *Śrī Sannidhi Guruparamparā*. It is stated that the Jīyar with his superhuman[2] powers was able to cure the daughter of the King from the evil effects of certain spirits. As a mark of respect, the King visited Ahobilam and paid obeisance to the Lord and the Jīyar. He also gifted the village of Śrī Bhāṣyapuram on the banks of river Pinākinī. The royal patronage was one of the causes for the Ahobila Maṭha gaining in prominence and prosperity during this period.

1 He later became famous as the royal preceptor of Sadāśiva. His son is the more famous Koṭikanyakādānam Tātācārya. The Tātācāryas trace their origin to Periya Nambi who administered *pañcasaṁskāra* to Rāmānuja. They belong to the Śaṭhamarṣaṇa Gotra. Acording to S.K. Iyengar, they belonged to Tolappar family (*History of Tirupati*, Vol II, p. 2 77).

2 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 274, Śrī Viśiṣṭādvaita Research Centre, 1992. See also "The Hindu" 13th November, 1966.

The Jīyar proceeded in his religious tour to North India. He visited Badarī[1] and then returned via Tirumala to South India. He visited Madhuramaṅgalam, Nīrvaḷūr, Iñjimeḍu, Kaḷathūr, Uragaḍam and Kāñcī and then proceeded to Ahobilam. During his pontificate, the Maṭha became a wealthy and powerful institution. The Jīyar himself enjoyed the status of a *rājasaṁnyāsī* and was provided with a paraphernalia consisting of elephants, horses, guards, etc., The Jīyar was assisted in his pontifical duties by one Rāmānuja Aiyaṅgār, who was his *Mudrādhikārī*. The *Śrī Sannidhi Guruparamparā* states that this Jīyar had a divine call from Jvālā Nṛsiṁha to worship the Lord permanently in His cave. Hence at the Lord's command he initiated *Iḷaṅkāḍu Kavisārvabhauma Śikhāmaṇi* into asceticism and appointed him as his successor and entered the Holy cave in Aṅgīrasa year, Māsi month, Kṛṣṇapakṣa pañcamī tithi (February 1513).[2] It is stated that the Jīyar has authored the following works - *Siddhānta Maṇi Dīpa*, *Pañcakāla Dīpikā*, *Prapatti Prayoga*, and *Nṛsiṁha Stava*. He ruled the pontificate for fourteen years and one month from January 1499 to February 1513.

1 Ibid. p. 275.

2 *Śrī Sannidhi Guruparamparā*, p. 58, states that the Śrī Kāryam Svāmī, who came to know of this later, came to Ahobilam and tearfully prayed for a final *darśan* of the Svāmī. The Svāmī appeared outside the cave, consoled the Śrīkāryam Svāmī, blessed him and then entered the cave, never to return. (Cf. *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 276).

His Taniyan reads as follows:

श्रीमच्छठारिमुनिपादसरोजहंसं श्रीमत्पराङ्कुशपदोधनलब्धबोधम्।
श्रीमन्नृसिंहवरदार्यदयावलम्बं श्रीमत्पराङ्कुशमुनिं प्रणतोऽस्मि नित्यम्॥

Epigraphical Records

Fortunately, Parāṅkuśa II is mentioned in many Inscriptions, which help us to fix his chronology.

Of the twenty-three Inscriptions[1] at Lower Ahobilam, thirteen fall within the period of King Acyuta Rāya and King Sadāśiva Rāya (1513-1564 A.D.). Six Inscriptions[2] at Upper Ahobilam belong to King Sadāśiva Rāya's era (1548-1564 A.D.). Parāṅkuśa Jīyar is specifically referred to in three Inscriptions at Lower Ahobilam[3] and two at Upper Ahobilam.[4] Mention is made of him in two Inscriptions[5] as the Trustee of the Ahobilam Temple. The Inscriptions at Lower Ahobilam bear the dates in Śaka 1472 (1550 A.D.) and Śaka 1477 (1555 A.D.). Those at Upper Ahobilam are dated in Śaka 1480 (1558 A.D.) and Śaka 1476 (1564 A.D.). Thus we find that the pontificate of Parāṅkuśa Jīyar II falls between 1550 A.D. and 1564 A.D. and entirely within the reign of King Sadāśiva Rāya. K.V. Raman refers to two

1 A.R. No: 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 66, 69, 72, 73 and 75, all of 1915 A.D.

2 Ibid. 78-81 and 87 of 1915.

3 Ibid. 65, 73-75 of 1915.

4 Ibid. 79 and 82 of 1915.

5 Ibid. 65 and 75 of 1915.

Inscriptions[1] at Kāñcī which speak of the association of Parāṅkuśa Jīyar II, with the Varadarāja Temple.

Śrī Vāhinīpati, the poet-laureate, has praised this Jīyar in his *Guruparampará Parāmarśa* wherein he refers to the Jīyar as the foremost among Saṁnyāsins, second only to Ādiśeṣa, third behind Bṛhaspati and Śukra, and fourth behind the Holy Trinity, *viz.* Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā.[2] Ātreya Ahobila Guru praises the Jīyar as a *Sarvatantraswatantra* in his work, Periya Vāccān Pillai's *Rāmāyaṇa Pratyeka Śloka Vistaraṇam.* He also eulogises the Jīyar for installing the images of Āḻvārs in many places.

7. *Śrī Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Jīyar was born in Iḷangāḍu (*agrahāram*) village in Kāñcī District in Bhāradvāja Gotra in the Tamil month of Vaikāśi under star Viśākhā. He assumed the office of pontificate in the Tamil month of Māsi in Āṅgirasa year (February, 1513) in his twenty-fifth year. He visited many holy shrines from Ahobilam to Rāmeśvaram. Because of his erudition, he was honoured with the titles of "*Śatalekhinī lekhānuguṇa kavitā dhuranthara, kavitārkika kaṇṭhīrava*". He wrote a five-act drama in Sanskrit titled "*Vāsantikā-*

1 K.V. Raman, *Varadarāja Swāmī Temple at Kāñcī*, p. 80.

2 *Vedānta Dīpikā*, 1923 October issue, p. 17. Article titled *Gurparampará Parāmarśam.* Cf. V.S. Seshadri, *History of Vaiṣṇavism from Vedic Times to the End of 16th Century A.D.* p. 268.

Pariṇayam".[1] He installed the images of Āḻvārs and Ācāryas in the Pūri temple which he visited. The Inscription at Lower Ahobilam mentions the restoration of the temple-custody to the Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha after the invaders were driven away by King Śrīraṅgarāya.

The Jīyar visited many *divyadeśas* including Tirumala, Kāñcī, Śrīraṅgam, Tirunārāyaṇapuram, Kumbhakoṇam, Āḻvār Tirunagari and stayed at Śrīraṅgam giving religious discourses. He attained Ācāryan Tiruvaḍi in the year Viṣu, in the Tamil month of Paṅguni on a pūrṇimā day at Śrīraṅgam (April, 1522). He ruled the pontificate for nine years and two months (1513-1522). His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrīraṅgam.

His Taniyan reads as follows:

श्रीपराङ्कुशयोगीन्द्रचरणाम्बुजशेखरम् ।
समस्तशास्त्रपारीणं शठकोपमुनिं भजे ॥

8. ***Śrī Parāṅkuśa Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Jīyar was born in the Tamil month of Mārgaḻi under star Aśvinī. He was initiated into the ascetic order by his *pūrvācārya* and he took charge as the spiritual head of the Ahobila Maṭha in the Viṣu year, in the month of Paṅguni (April 1522) on a Śukla ekādaśī day. He stayed at Śrīraṅgam for the rest of his life, giving discourses on religious and the philosophical texts like

1 The theme of the drama is the marriage of Lord Nṛsiṁha with Ceñcu Lakṣmī daughter of the chieftain of the hill tribes.

the *Śrībhāṣya*, *Bhagavad Viṣayam* and *Śrutaprakāśikā*, and worshipping Lord Raṅganātha. He attained *paramapada* in the year Heviḷambi in the month of Mārgaḷi (January, 1538) on a Kṛṣṇapakṣa pañcamī tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for fifteen years and nine months (1522-1538).

His Taniyan reads as follows:

शठकोपयतिश्रेष्ठपदपङ्कजषट्पदम् ।
सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञं पराङ्कुशमुनिं भजे ॥

9. ***Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Svāmī was born in the month of Āni under star Tiruvādirai. He became the pontifical head in the year Heviḷambi, in Mārgaḷi month, on a pūrṇimā day (January 1538) at Śrīraṅgam.

This Jīyar stayed at Śrīraṅgam for sometime and then proceeded to Kumbhakoṇam to offer worship to Lord Ārāvamudan. He stayed there for sometime and is said to have developed the temple premises by constructing *maṇṭapas*. Then he proceeded to Śrīmuṣṇam, Tirukkovalūr, Kāñcī, Tirumala and then to Ahobilam where he is said to have offered worship at all the nine Nṛsiṁha shrines. He took up the task of constructing *maṇṭapas*, buildings steps leading to the shrines at Ahobilam, and dedicating his life to Lord Nṛsiṁha's worship. He attained *paramapada* in the month of Āni in the year Śubhakṛt (July 1542) on Kṛṣṇa caturthī. His Bṛndāvanam is at Ahobilam. He ruled the pontificate for four years and six months (1538 - 1542).

His Taniyan reads as follows:

श्रीमन्नृसिंहवरदपराङ्कुशकृपाश्रयम्।
श्रीमन्नारायणमुनिं वन्दे श्रीभाष्यदेशिकम्॥

10. *Śrī Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Jīyar was born in the month of Vaikāsi under star Viśakā. He assumed the office of pontificate in the year Śubhakṛt, Āni month (July 1542) on Kṛṣṇa pakṣa tṛtīyā tithi.

He set out on his religious tours (*divyadeśasañcāra*) visiting Tirumala, Kāñcī, Śrīperumbūdūr, Tiruvallikkeṇi, Tiruviḍantai, Tirunīrmalai, Tirucci-ttirakūṭam totalling nearly forty-two holy shrines. He then left for Tirunārāyaṇapuram at the instance of the Lord, and stayed there till the end of his life. He left for his heavenly abode in the year Siddhārthi, in the month of Āni on Kṛṣṇadvādaśī (July 1559). He ruled over the pontificate for seventeen years (1542 - 1559).

His Taniyan reads as under :

वरदार्यगुरूत्तंसचरणाम्बुजषट्पदम्।
शठकोपमुनिं वन्दे शठारिप्रवणं सदा॥

11. *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Vaṅgīpuram village in Tiruvallūr in Bhāradvāja Gotra in the month of Aippaśi under star Mūlam. He assummed

the office of pontificate in Āni month, Siddhārthi year (July 1559) at Tirunārāyaṇapuram.

He visited the holy shrines at Tirumala, Tiruvallūr, Kāñcī and Śrīraṅgam. He stayed for sometime at Śrīraṅgam,[1] enlightening the people about Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy. After revisiting Tirunārāyaṇapuram, the Jīyar came to Śrīraṅgam where he spent the rest of his life in the service of the Lord and the propagation of Śrī Rāmānuja Darśana. This Jīyar occupies the pride of place among the Jīyars to have ruled the pontificate for a long period of 38 years and 9 months.[2] He attained *paramapada* on Kṛṣṇapakṣa Caturdaśī tithi in the month of Citra in Vilambi year (April 1598). His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrīraṅgam.

His Taniyan reads as follows:

पराङ्कुशशठारातिपदाम्भोजैकधारकम्।
श्रीनिवासमुनिं वन्दे मादृशामपि तारकम्॥

12 ***Sriman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Svāmī was born in Bhāradvāja Gotra under star Pūraṁ, in the month of Puraṭṭāsi at Vaṇgīpuram. He became the pontifical head in the month of Citra in the year Vilambi on Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa daśamī tithi (April 1598) at Śrīraṅgam. He then proceeded in his *sañcāra* to Tirunārāyaṇapuram. He

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1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam.*

2 Ibid, p. 282.

stayed for sometime there, worshipping the Lord and paying obeisance to his *pūrvācārya* Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī at his Bṛndāvanam there. He has the distinction of having discoursed on the *Śrībhāṣya* twelve times (*dvādaśā vṛttī*) there.

Then he proceeded to Ahobilam, Tirumala, Tiruvallūr, Kāñcī and returned to Tirunārāyaṇapuram. He attained Ācāryan Tiruvaḍi in the month of Puraṭṭāśi, in Āṅgirasa year on Kṛṣṇapakṣa ṣaṣṭī tithi (September, 1632). He ruled over the pontificate for 34 years and 5 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tirunārāyaṇapuram.

His Taniyan reads as follows :

श्रीपराङ्कुशयोगीन्द्र श्रीनिवासपदाश्रयम्।
श्रीमन्नारायणमुनिं वन्दे वेदान्तदेशिकम्॥

13 ***Śrī Vīrarāghava Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This svāmī was born in Tiruvallūr (Vaṅgīpuram agrahāram) in Bhāradvāja Gotra in the month of Āni under star Uttarāsāḍhā. He became the pontifical head in the year Āṅgīrasa in the month of Puraṭṭāśi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa pañcamī tithi (September 1632) at Tiruˆnārāyaṇapuram.

He started his *divyadeśa sañcāra* visiting Śrīraṅgam, Tirumàliruñjolai, and Āḻvār Tirunagari. He stayed for sometime there worshipping the Lord and paying his obeisance at the shrines of Naṁmāḻvār and Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa

Svāmī[1]. Following the instructions given by Naṁmāḻvār in his dream, the Jīyar gave discourses on Bhagavaḍ viṣaya for more than a year, there. Then he proceeded to Śrīvilliputtūr, and after visiting Tiruppullāni, procceded to Ahobilam and then decided to spend the rest of his life at Śrīraṅgam, enlightening his disciples in Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy through his discourses.

He attained *paramapada* in the year Naḻa, in the month of Aippaśi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa ṣaṣṭhī tithi (October 1676). He ruled over the pontificate for 44 years and one month. He has the credit of having ruled over the Maṭha for a very large number of years next only to Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa. Hence he is referred to the *Śrī Sannidhi* cirlces respectfully as the Elder Śrī Vīrarāghava Śaṭhakopa Svāmī. His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrīraṅgam.

His Taniyan reads as under:-

श्रीमन्नारायणमुनेः पदपङ्कजहंसकम्।
वीरराघवयोगीन्द्रं वन्दे वरगुणाकरम्॥

14. *Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the month of Āḍi under star Uttarāṣāḍham. He became the pontifical head on Kṛṣṇapakṣa pañcamī tithi in the year Naḻa in the month of Aippaśi corresponding to the month of October 1676. He stayed at

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1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 284.

Śrīraṅgam for sometime giving religious and philosphical discourses and performing *pañcasaṁskāra* and *prapatti* for those who so desired.

This Jīyar wrote the *Ācārya Guṇādarśa*[1] in compliance with the request of his disciples who wanted their *guru* to expound on *Guru Paramparāprabhāva*. The *Puruṣakāra Mīmāmsā*[2] (ascribed by the *Śrī Sannidhi Guruparamparā* to the second Jīyar) is said to be authored by this Jīyar. He has also written the *Gītārthasaṅgrahavibhāga*, *Gītārthasaṅgrahasāra* and *Jijñāsāsūtrabhāṣya-Bhāvaprakāśikā*.

He then proceeded to Kumbhakoṇam and then to his native place Pullambūtaṅguḍi, where he paid his obeisance to Lord Valvilli Rāma and Hemāmbhujavalli Tāyār. He visited many *divyadeśas* in and around Tanjore. Later the Jīyar attained *Paramapada* at Tirukkaṇḍiyūr on the banks of river Kāverī on an amāvāsyā day in the year Akṣaya in the month of Āḍi (August 1686). He ruled over the pontificate for 9 years and 10 months. His Bṛndāvanam is a Tirukkaṇḍiyūr.

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1 D. No: 16566 - GOML - This Manuscript is complete. It describes the qualities of a Preceptor in the light of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta. Reference is made to Rāmānuja and Vedāntadeśika.

2 See G. Sakuntala's Ph.D. Thesis, "Concept of Śrī as Puruṣkāra according to Nārāyaṇamuni's *Puruṣakāra Mīmāṁsa*".

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीवीरराघवमुनेर्वीरिवस्यैकजीवनम् ।
समाश्रयेमहि श्रीमन्नारायणमुनीश्वरम् ॥

15. *Śrī Vīrarāghava Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born at Eśanūr near Kāñcī in Thaṭṭai in Vādhūla Gotra in the month of Thai under star Citrā. He assumed the office of the pontificate in the year Akṣaya in the month of Āḍi (August 1686) on purṇimā tithi.

He travelled from Tirukkaṇḍiyūr visiting many *divyadeśas* enroute, like Tirukkovalūr and then reached Kāñcī. He settled down at Kāñcī and discoursed on the *Śrībhāṣya* and other texts in accordance to the wishes of his disciples who resorted to his holy feet from far and wide. In the year Bhava, in the month of Puraṭṭāsi (October 1694), this Jīyar attained *paramapada* on Kṛṣṇapakṣa ekādaśī tithi at Kāñcī. He ruled over the pontificate for 8 years and 2 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Kāñcī.

His Taniyan reads as follows:-

श्रीनारायणयोगीन्द्रपदाम्भोजैकजीवनम् ।
भजे श्रीरङ्गकल्याणवीरराघवयोगिनम् ॥

16. *Śrī Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Śokatūr agrahāram (near Kāñcī) in the month of Mārgaḻi under star Mṛgaśīrṣa. He became the pontifical head in the year Bhava, in the month of Puraṭṭāśi (October 1694) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa daśami tithi.

After paying his obeisance to the Lord at Kāñcī, this Svāmī proceeded on his *divyadeśa* tour of the Southern districts. He reached Tiruvahīndrapuram where he performed *maṅgalāśāsana* to Lord Devanātha and Lord Hayagrīva. It was at that time, that a scholar, named Tirunārāyaṇapuram Devanāthācār Svāmī resorted to the holy feet of the Jīyar. He gave discourse on the *Grantha-catuṣṭaya* before the Jīyar Svāmī and had his *prapatti* done by the Jīyar. Then he fervently prayed to the Jīyar to grant him the ochre robes and take him into the ascetic fold. Accordingly, he was initiated into the *tūrīyāśrama* (asceticism) and the Jīyar handed the Tridaṇḍa to him and named him Keśava Śaṭhakopa Jīyar and ordained him to write a *Vyākhyāna* for *Tiruvāymoḻi*. Obeying his *Ācārya's* command, he wrote the *Padineṇ-ṇāyirappaḍi* and placed it at the holy feet of his *guru*. The Jīyar blessed his work and asked him to give discourses on *darśana granthas*.

Śrī Śaṭhakopa Jīyar then proceeded on tours to Tirukkovalūr, Śrīmuṣṇam, Citrakūṭam, Teraḻundūr, Kumbhakoṇam and Tiruvindaḻūr. He stayed for sometime at Kumbhakoṇam during which time Kiḍāmbi Śrī Veṅkaṭācārya Svāmī paid obeisance to the Jīyar and gave philosophical discourses in his presence.

The Jīyar attained *paramapada* in the year Bahudhānya, in the month of Vaikāśi (June 1698) on Śuklapakṣa aṣṭamī tithi at Kumbhakoṇam. He ruled over the pontificate for 3 years and 8 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Kumbhakoṇam.

His Taniyan reads as under:

कल्याणराघवमुनेः कृपापात्रं दयानिधिम् ।
सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञं शठकोपमुनिं भजे ॥

17. ***Śrī Vīrarāghava Vedānta Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Svāmī was born in the month of Puraṭṭāsi in Tiruvelliyaṅguḍi under the Śatabhiṣak star. He became the pontifical head in the year Bahudhānya, in the month Vaikāśi, on Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi (June 1698).

He proceeded in his *divyadeśa sañcāra* from Kumbhakoṇam to Śrīraṅgam and then to Tiruvelliyaṅguḍi. He stayed for sometime there, doing *maṅgaḷāśāsana* to Śrī Kolavilli Rāma and Marakatavallī Tāyār. Later he proceeded to Śrīraṅgam and stayed there for sometime giving religious discourses at Rāmānuja's *sannidhi* inside the temple premises. He gave discourses for twelve times on the *Śrībhāṣya*, fifteen times on the *Bhagavad Viṣaya*, ten times on the *Gītā Bhāṣya* and ten times on *Śrīmad*

Rahasyatrayasāra.[1] He was instrumental in providing the Lord with many *divyābharaṇas.*

The Svāmī then proceeded to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and paid his obeisance to the Lord there. He stayed for sometime at the Bṛndāvanam of Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī, then he returned to Śrīraṅgam and proceeded on a tour of the southern districts of Tirukkaṇḍiyūr, Kūḍalūr, Pullambūdaṅguḍi and Kumbhakoṇam. He also ordered many *divya* ornaments to be made for adorning Lord Valvilli Rāma and Lord Ārāvamudan. After worshipping at Tirumala, he proceeded to Śrī Ahobilam, the abode of nine Narasiṁhas. Then he went to Tiruvallūr to pay obeisance to Lord Vīrarāghava and Goddess Kanakavallī. Next in his itinerary were Śrīperumbūdūr, Tiruvallikkeṇi, Tirunīrmalai and Kāñcī. Then he proceeded to Tiruppuṭkuḻi, the abode of Lord Vijayarāghava.

This Svāmī fell ill there and attained *paramapada* in the year Pramādīca in the month of Thai on Kṛṣṇapakṣa prathamā tithi (January 1734). He ruled over the pontificate for 35 years and 7 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tiruppuṭkuḻi.

His Taniyan is as under:

श्रीमन्नारायणमुनिं श्रीशठारिपदाश्रयम्।
श्रीवीरराघवमुनिं वन्दे वेदान्तदेशिकम्॥

1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 291.

18. *Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the month of Puraṭṭāsi under star Āyilyam in the family of Vīravalli at Tiruvallūr. He became the pontifical head in Pramādīca year in the month of Thai (January 1734) on śuklapakṣa ekādaśī tithi. He proceeded from Tiruppuṭkuḻi to Kāñcī and then to Śrīraṅgam where he stayed for sometime, giving discourses on *Grantha catuṣṭaya*. At that time, one Koil Kandādai Aṇṇan Svāmī resorted to the holy feet of the Jīyar and learnt the philosophical truths expounded in the *Śrībhaṣya* from him. Aṇṇan Svāmī was in charge of the Daśāvatāra *sannidhi* at Śrīraṅgam which was handed over to the ancestors of Aṇṇan Svāmī by Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī. Obeying the divine command, Aṇṇan Svāmī handed over the Daśāvatāra *sannidhi* along with its property, landed and monetary, to the Jīyar. It is also interesting to note that the silver *vigraha* of Lord Raṅganātha which is one of the many idols carried by the Jīyar in the silver *maṇṭapa*, in all his *sañcāras* (tours) and to which special *pūjās* and offerings are made day and night by the Jīyar, is the *vigraha* which had once adorned the house of Aṇṇan Svāmī and was handed over by his ancestor to the Ahobila Maṭha.

This Svāmī attained *paramapada* in the year Rākṣasa in the month of Āḍi (July 1735) in Kṛṣṇapakṣa ekādaśi tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for 18 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrīraṅgam.

His Taniyan reads as follows:

श्रीमद्राघववेदान्तमुनिवर्यपदाश्रयम्।
श्रीमन्नारायणमुनिं श्रये श्रीभाष्यदेशिकम्॥

19. *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Tiruvallikeṇi in the Naḍādūr family in the month of Māsi under star Maghā. He became the pontifical head in Rākṣasa year on the month of Āḍi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa navamī tithi (July, 1735). He proceeded from Śrīraṅgam and visited many *divyadeśas* like Kumbhakoṇam, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Tirukkovalūr, Madhurāntakam, Kāñcī, Tirumala and Ahobilam, then returned via Ghaṭikācala, Tirumala, Tiruvallūr, Tiruvallikkeṇi, Tirunīrmalai, Tiruviḍanthai, Tirukkovalūr, Śrīmuṣṇam and then to Pullambūtaṅguḍi. There, he stayed for sometime, performing *maṅgalāśāsana* to Lord Valvilli Rāma. He attained *paramapada* in the year Krodhana in the month of Māsi (February, 1746) on Śuklapakṣa caturthī tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for 10 years and 7 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Pullambūtaṅguḍi.

His Taniyan reads as under:-

श्रीमन्नारायणमुनेः पदपद्मसमाश्रयम्।
श्रीनिवासमुनिं वन्दे वेदान्तद्वयदेशिकम्॥

20. *Śrī Vīrarāghava Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Pillaippākkam village near Śrīperumbūdūr (the birthplace of Rāmānuja) in the month of Puraṭṭāsi under star Mūla. He became the pontifical head in Krodhana year in the month of Māśi (February,1746) on Śukla pakṣa trithīyā tithi.

This Svāmī proceeded from Pullambūtaṅguḍi to Śrīraṅgam and then to Tiruᵕnārāyaṇapuram and from there to Tirumala and then to Ahobilam. On his way to Ahobilam the Svāmī got the divine call and left for his heavenly abode, in the year Prabhava, in the month of Paṅguni (March, 1748) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa saptamī tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for two years and one month.

It is not known for sure as to where exactly this Svāmī's Bṛndāvanam is situated. The *Śrī Sannidhi Guruparampāra* simply states that it is in the northern region (Vada deśa).[1]

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीनिवासमुनिश्रेष्ठलब्धवेदान्तसम्पदम् ।
श्रीवीरराघवमुनिं कल्याणगुणमाश्रये ॥

1 See p. 77.

21. *Śrī Parāṅkuśa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Thaiyār agrahāram in Vañgīpuram (in Kāñcī district) in Bhāradvāja Gotra in the month of Paṅguni under star Hastā. He became the pontifical head in the year Prabhava in the month of Paṅguni (March 1748) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa ṣaṣthi tithi.

This Svāmī proceeded to Ahobilam and then to Tirumala and from there to Tiruvallūr. He visited Śrīperumbūdūr, Kāñcī, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Kumbhakoṇam and Śrīraṅgam. During his stay at Śrīraṅgam the Svāmī gave discourses on the *Śrībhāṣya* before Vedāntadeśika's *sannidhi* inside the temple precincts. Later, he visited Tirunārāyaṇapuram and the Bṛndāvanam of Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī, where he developed an intense desire to write a *prabandha* about his *Ācārya*. This gained divine approval instantly, by Garuda circling in the sky above. Accordinly, the Svāmī wrote Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī's *Aḍaikkalappathu* comprising of eleven verses. This beautiful string of verses beginning with *Ādimaraiyumāna* extolling Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī's greatness is included in the daily *Nityānusandhāna* in Ahobila Maṭha till this day. He also wrote *Satsaṁpradāyasāra* which gives concisely the *Ācāryavaibhava* of all the preceeding Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha. He also wrote *maṅgala* verses on Lord

Nṛsiṁha, Lord Kṛṣṇa and also a few songs to be sung during the cradle ceremony of Lord Kṛṣṇa (*ḍolotsavam*).

For sometime, the Svāmī stayed at Tirunārāyaṇapuram and then left for Śrīraṅgam. But on his way, the Svāmī fell ill and passed away. He attained *paramapada* in the year Īśvara, in the month of Kārthigai (November, 1757) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa caturthī tithi at Pālameḍu. He ruled over the pontificate for 9 years and 8 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Pālameḍu.

His Taniyan reads as under:

वेदान्तोत्तरवीरराघवमुनेर्नारायणश्रीनिधि-
श्रीमद्वीररघूद्वहाख्ययमिनां कारुण्यवीक्षास्पदम्।
विज्ञातोभयवेदमौलिहृदयं विद्वच्छिरोभूषणं
वन्देयानुदिनं पराङ्कुशमुनिं वैराग्यभक्त्यन्वितम्॥

22. ***Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Svāmī was born in Gadādharapuram agrahāram in the month of Āḍi under star Rohiṇī. He became the pontifical head in the year Īśvara, in the month of Mārgaḻi (January, 1758) on Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi in Pālameḍu.

This Svāmī proceeded to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and paid obeisance to the Lord there. Then he visited the Bṛndāvanam of Śrī Ādivaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī and stayed for six months there. Responding to the divine call, he proceeded to Śrīraṅgam but fell ill on the way. He attained *paramapada* in Pālameḍu in the

year Bahudhānya in the month of Āḍi (August, 1758) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa ṣaṣṭhi tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for only 7 months, the shortest period of pontificate for any Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha. His Bṛndāvanam is at Pālameḍu.

His Taniyan reads as under:

विद्याम्भोधिपराङ्कुशाख्यमुनिराडङ्घ्रिद्वयीसंश्रितं
त्रय्यन्तामृतवर्षिणं तनुभृतां त्राणाय जातोदयम्।
क्षोण्यां ख्यातसमस्ततन्त्रकुशलव्याख्यातृताशालिनं
श्रीनारायणयोगिवर्यमनिशं कारुण्यपूर्णं भजे॥

23. *Śrī Vīrarāghava Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Tiruvelliyaṅguḍi in the month of Āni, under star Uttarattadi. He became the pontifical head in Bahudhānya year, in the month of Āḍi (August, 1758) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa pañcamī tithi. He proceeded from Pālameḍu to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and then to the Bṛndāvanam of Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī where he stayed for some time. He then proceeded to Ahobilam and after worshipping the nine Nṛsiṁhas, he started his *divyadeśa sañcāra* (tour) visiting Tirumala, Tiruvallūr, Tirunindravūr, Tiruvallikkeṇi, Śrīperumbūdūr, Kāñcī, Tirukkovalūr, Kumbhakoṇam and Śrīraṅgam. He then proceeded to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and then to Śrīraṅgapaṭṭinam and settled down there. He attained *Ācāryan Tiruvaḍi* in the year Svabhānu, in the month of Thai (Februrary, 1763) on Śuklapakṣa daśamī tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for 5 years and 6 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrīraṅgapaṭṭinam.

His Taniyan reads as follows:

वीरराघववेदान्तनारायणपदाश्रयम्।
श्रीवीरराघवमुनिं संश्रये श्रितवत्सलम्॥

24. *Śrī Parāṅkuśa Rāmānuja Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the Kalyāṇapuram Cakravarti family in the month of Citra under star Punarvasu. He became the pontifical head in the year Svabhānu in the month of Thai (February, 1763) on Śukla pañcamī in Śrīraṅgapaṭṭinam. He proceeded to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and then to Śrīraṅgam and from there went to Ahobilam. The King of Gadvāl samasthān, Somabhūpāla, who came to know that the Jīyar was camping at Ahobilam, paid his obeisance to the Jīyar and invited him to visit his Kingdom. Complying to his invitation, the Jīyar visited Gadvāl and did pañcasaṁskāra to the King and his family. The king in return made generous endowments in the form of cash, lands and gold ornaments for the Lord.[1] The Jīyar later proceeded to Tirumala and then to Tirunārāyaṇapuram where he gave religious and philosophical discourses. Then he wrote *Śrīprapatti*, *Śrī Nṛsiṁha maṅgalāśāsana*, *Śrīstava* and *Śrīpañcāśat*.

On his way to Śrīraṅgam, near Kokkarāyanpeṭṭai, the Svāmī fell ill and attained ***puramapada*** in the year Manmatha, in the month of Māsi (March,

1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*. p. 303 and *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*, Special issue, p. 30, June 1992.

1776) on Kṛṣṇapakṣa Tṛtīyā tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for 13 years and one month. His Bṛndāvanam is at Kokkarāyanpeṭṭai.

His Taniyan reads as follows:-

श्रीवीरराघवमुनिश्रुतिमौलिसूरि-श्रीमत्पदाम्बुजसमाश्रयलब्धबोधम्।
श्रीवीरराघवमुनीन्द्रकृपावलम्बं श्रीमत्पराङ्कुशयतीन्द्रगुरुं भजामः॥

25. *Śrī Śrīnivāśa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the month of Āḍi under Svāti star. He assumed the office of the pontificate in the year Manmatha in the month of Paṅguni (1776, March) in Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi.

The Svāmī was well-versed in *Tarka, Mīmāṁsā* and other *śāstras* and was a *Pañcakālaparāyaṇa* in his *pūrvāśrama*. He gave religious and philosophical discourses on *Śrībhaṣya, Śatadūṣaṇi, Nyāyapariśuddhi* and *Nyayasiddhāñjana* after becoming the pontifical head. He was well-grounded in *jñāna* and *anuṣṭhāna* and adorned the pontifical seat like a *Yatisārvabhauma.*

Jealous of the Jīyar's erudition and scholastic achievements, one of his disciples dared to poison him.[1] But the Svāmī's benedictory glance was enough to make the disciple accept his crime and beg for the Svāmī's

1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 313.

forgiveness which was granted instantly. This incident was actually instrumental in attracting innumerable devotees into the Jīyar's fold.

This Svāmī then proceeded to Śrīraṅgam and did *maṅgalāśāsana* to Lord Raṅganātha. He is said to have recited the following *śloka* while praying to the Lord[1] —

श्रीरङ्गे रङ्गनाथः फणिपतिशयने दक्षिणां वीक्षमाणः
ख्यातं शीतांशुतीर्थं प्रणवपरिणतं तद्विमानं च दिव्यम्।
आद्यं व्यक्तं स्वयं च स्थलमतिशुभदं नायिका रङ्गपूर्वा
भूमेर्वैकुण्ठमेतत् जगति विजयते सह्यजेन्दुप्रसिक्तम्॥

The Jīyar proceeded on a tour of Southern districts visiting Kumbhakoṇam, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Kāñcī and other places. Wishing to visit Badarikāśrama, the Jīyar proceeded northwards. He was confronted on the way by an evil sorcerer who threatened the Jīyar and his entourage. By invoking the Lord through *Nṛsiṁha anuṣṭup-mantra*, the Jīyar made the sorcerer ineffective. He fell at the Jīyar's feet asking for his pardon.[2]

Unnerved by these threats the Svāmī proceeded to Gadvāl, where at a village named Sūrāpuram (Cuddapa district) he met a great scholar Kirīṭi Veṅkaṭācārya who challenged the Jīyar to a literary debate on Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy. The Jīyar argued that a knowledge of the *kāraṇavastu* was

1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 313.
2 *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*, Special issue, p. 31, June 1992.
Satsampradāya Muktāvali, p. 87

enough as *kāryavastu* became self-evident through this knowledge, Veṅkaṭācārya Svāmī took the opposite stand. The debate continued for fifteen days and on the night before the concluding date, Lord Nṛsiṁha appeared in the Jīyar's dream and advised him to argue his point after referring to the *Śrutaprakāśikā* and *Śatadūṣaṇī*. Obeying the Lord's command. The Jīyar emerged victorious in the debate whereupon the Sūrāpuram King became his disciple and granted many endowments in cash and kind to Ahobila Maṭha and honoured the Jīyar by carrying him in a palanquin on his shoulders. After staying for sometime at Sūrāpuram, accepting the hospitality of Veṅkatācārya Svāmī, the Jīyar proceeded on his tour.

The king of Gadvāl, Somabhūpāla received the Jīyar with full state honours on his arrival at the capital. He stayed for sometime there and the king donated many ornaments to the Lord and gave a generous grant in kind to the Maṭha, Later the Jīyar proceeded to Ahobilam and after worshipping the nine Nṛsiṁhas, he went on a tour of Tirumala, Tiruvallūr, Tirunindravūr, Tiruallikkeṇi, Śrīperumbūdūr, Kāñcī, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Tiruccitrakūṭam, Śrīmūṣaṇam and Kumbhakoṇam. There he stayed for sometime and wrote *Saccaritraratnāvali*, *Śrī Nṛsiṁhastava* and *Śrī Nṛsiṁhamaṅgala*. He then proceeded to Śrīraṅgam and then to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and then came down to Pullambūtaṅguḍi and settled there. At that time, Tanjore was ruled by King Serfoji (1796-1833). Lord Nṛsiṁha appeared in the king's dream and directed

him to make endowments in kind to Ahobila Maṭha. Whereupon, the king invited the Jīyar to his royal abode and paid obeisance to him relating his dream to the Jīyar. The Jīyar was pleasantly surprised by the king's donation of a village near Pullambūtaṅguḍi to Ahobila Maṭha for the daily worship of the Lord. Therefore the village came to be called Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram. The Jīyar in turn, gave his holy sandals to the king who accepted and worshipped them with great veneration.[1]

The Jīyar then returned to Pullambūtaṅguḍi and ordered a Maṭha to be constructed at Nṛsiṁhapuram. He stayed there giving religious and philosophical discourses on Vedānta texts. Later due to old age, the Jīyar passed away. He attained *paramapada* in the year Prajotpatti, in the month of Kārtigai (30.11.1811) on pūrṇimā tithi. His Bṛndāvanam is at Nṛsiṁhapuram. He ruled over the pontificate for 35years and 8 months. This Jīyar is said to be an *aṁśa* of Vainateya (Garuḍa).[2] Even today devotees are miraculously cured of their illness by praying at his Bṛndāvanam. It was also during his pontifical period that the largest amount of landed property was acquired by Ahobila Maṭha.[3]

1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 313.

2 See "The Hindu", November 13, 1966.

3 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 313.

His Taniyan reads as under:-

श्रीवासवीररघुवर्यपराङ्कुशादि-रामानुजार्यमुनिभिर्गुरुसार्वभौमैः ।
संप्रेक्षितं करुणया परिपूर्णबोधं श्रीश्रीनिवासयतिशेखरमाश्रयामः ॥

26. *Śrī Raṅganātha Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the month of Āḍi under star Pūram at *Gadādharapuram* in Śrīvatsa Gotra. He became the pontifical head in the year Prajotpatti, in the month of Kārtikai, on Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi (21.11.1811).

This Jīyar proceeded from Nṛsiṁhapuram to Tiruādanūr, Kumbhakoṇam and then to Śrīraṅgam. From there he went to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and stayed there for sometime. The ruler of Mysore Śrī Kṛṣṇarāja Kaṇṭhīrava Sārvabhauma, sent his emissary to meet the Jīyar and to invite the Jīyar to Mysore. Complying to his request, the Jīyar proceeded to Mysore where he was received with full royal honours. Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha was placed on a golden swing (*ḍolā*) inside a silver *maṇṭapa* and many ornaments were donated by the King. A *vajra* vessel was also made for the Lord's Tiruvārādhana. After enjoying royal hospitality for sometime the Jīyar started on his prerignations.

The Jīyar went to Ahobilam and then to Tirumala, Tiruvallūr, Kāñcī, Tirukkovalūr, Tiruvahīndrapuram, and then to Kumbhakoṇam. From there he proceeded *via* Śrīraṅgam to Śrīvilliputtūr. There the Jīyar was instrumental in building a Maṭha in the *sannidhi* street and also performing many renovations in the Āṇḍāḷ *sannidhi*. Then he visited the nine Tirupathīs in South India, doing *maṅgaḷāśāsana* to the deities there and then returned to Nṛsiṁhapuram. Here, he arranged for the construction of a Bṛndāvanam for his predecessor, the 25th Jīyar and installed his image there. He also established an *agrahāra* (Brahmin settlement) nearby called Śrīraṅganāthapuram. Complying to the request of his disciplies the Jīyar wrote a manual on the daily rites to be followed by the Ahobila Maṭha titled *Śrī Sannidhi Āhnika*. He also wrote a few verses on Lord Nṛsiṁha. Due to his old age, the Jīyar left for his heavenly abode in the year Sarvadhāri, in the month of Mārgaḷi (20.12.1828) on Śuklapakṣa caturdaśī tithi. He ruled over the pontificate for 17 years and one month. His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram. This Jīyar was the son of the 25th Jīyar in his *pūrvāśrama*.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीवीरराघवयतीन्द्रपराङ्कुशादि-रामानुजार्यकमलानिधियोगिवर्यैः ।
संप्रेक्षितं करुणया परिपूर्णबोधं श्रीरङ्गनाथयतिशेखरमाश्रयामः ॥

27. *Śrī Vīrarāghava Vedānta Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the month of Vaikāśi, under star Aviṭṭam in Gadādharapuram in Iḷanagar (Kāñcī). He became the pontifical head in the year Sarvadhāri in the month of Mārgaḻi on Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi (10.1.1829).

He toured Pillambūtaṅguḍi, Ādanūr, Kumbhakoṇam, Tiruccitrakūtam, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Kāñcī, Tiruvaḷḷūr, Tirumala and then proceeded to Ahobilam. After worshipping the nine Nṛsiṁhas, he stayed for sometime at Lower Ahobilam and paid his obeisance to Lord Prahlādavarada. The reigning King of Gadvāl, a *Śrī Sannidhiśiṣya*, paid his respects to the Jīyar and invited him to visit Gadvāl. Responding to his invitation the Jīyar visited Gadvāl and stayed there for sometime.

This Jīyar has many works to his credit. He has written the *Vaikuṇṭha Vijaya Campū*[1] (a retaliation to *Nīlakaṇṭha Vijaya Campū*), *Caṇḍamāruta Vyākhyāna*, *Tātparya Ratnāvalī*, *Brahmaśabdavādārtha*, *Viśeṣa Tarka Vāda*, *Vṛttisūtra* in *Vyākaraṇa*, *Vyākaraṇaśloka* for *Mahābhāṣya*, *Saṁkramaṇa-nirṇaya*, *Jayantīnirṇaya*, *Strīsaṁskāraviṣayanirṇaya*, *Mūlamantrajapa-nirṇaya*, *Nyāsollāsa*, *Kṛpāsāgarastava*, *Daśavāradīrghagāyatrī-japanirṇayaśloka*, *Yativiṣaye sudarśanahomābhāvanirṇaya*, *Kṣīrana-*

1 See *Viśiṣṭādvaitakośa*, preface - p. xv:
वैकुण्ठविजयः शैवकृतनीलकण्ठविजयचम्पूप्रतिभटः ।

dīstavam, Nandādhipastava, Vihageśvarastava, Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁhastava Śrīvaṇśaṭhāristava, Śrī Vīrarāghavastavam, Śrī Ghaṭisūtranirṇayam, Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha maṅgalam, and *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Yatīndra Mahādeśika Daśakam.*

This Jīyar was a famous personage during his pontifical term. The rapport between this Jīyar and the King of Gadvāl can be understood from the fact when the Jīyar fell ill, he left the Ahobila Maṭha in charge of the King of Gadvāl and authorised him to find a suitable successor to the pontificate.[1]

This Jīyar attained *paramapada* in the year Khara, in the month of Āvaṇi, in Śuklapakṣa aṣṭamī tithi (17.8.1831). His Bṛndāvanam is on the banks of river Kṛṣṇā in Gadvāl district. He ruled over the pontificate for a short period of 2 years and 7 months. This Jīyar was the grandson of the 25th Jīyar and the son of the 26th Jīyar in their *pūrvāśrama.*

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्री श्रीनिवासयतिशेखरलब्धबोधं श्रीरङ्गनाथयतिधुर्यपदाब्जभृङ्गम्।
श्रीवीरराघवमुनिश्रुतिमौलिसूरिं श्रीनाथभक्तिभरिताशयमाश्रयामः॥

28. *Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the month of Āvaṇi under star Mūlam in the Nadāḍūr family in Śrīvatsa Gotra in Tirukkuruṅguḍi His *pūrvāśrama* name

1 There was a gap of about two years before a worthy successor could be found by the king of Gadvāl.

was Śrī Vānamāmalācāriār. This Svāmī and his younger brother Śrī Veṅkaṭanārāyaṇācār Svāmī were well known scholars in their village. So excellent were their memory skills, that they could discourse on the *Śrībhāṣya*, *Śrutaprakāśikā* and *Īḍu Muppattārāyirappaḍi* without referring to the concerned books. Both of them were well-grounded in *jñāna* and *anuṣṭhāna*.

There was an interregnum for a period of one year and eleven months after the passing away of the 27th Jīyar. The King of Gadvāl, who was given the charge of nominating a suitable successor to the pontifical throne, called for a *vidvatsadas* (a meeting of eminent scholars) to make his selection. The choice naturally fell on Tirukuruṅguḍi Svāmī who was well-qualified, with excellent communication skills to elucidate on the subtleties of the Viśiṣṭādvaita system of philosophy. He was able to establish his superiority in literary debates too, by winning over his adversaries with the greatest ease. In response to the King's request, this Svāmī donned the ochre robes and became the pontifical head in the year Vijaya, in the month of Āni, on Kṛṣṇapakṣa pañcamī tithi (7.7.1833).

In the hierarchy of Ahobilam Maṭha Jīyars, this Svāmī is placed on par with Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī, Śrī Ṣaṣṭha Parāṅkuśa Svāmī and Śrī

Śrīnivāsa Yatīndra Mahādeśika. He is also said to have granted succour to his afflicted devotees through his mantric powers.[1]

This Svāmī proceeded from Gadvāl to Ahobilam, Tirumala, Tiruvallūr, Śrī Perumbūdūr, Kāñcī and Madhurāntakam where he stayed for sometime performing *maṅgalāśāsana* to Lord Kodaṇḍa Rāma and Goddess Janakavallī. He also gave religious and philosophical discourses to his devotees.

An incident is related in the Jīyar's life, when a rich devotee who was proud of his wealth, offered many pomegranate fruits and gold coins to the Jīyar. In order to humble his pride, the Jīyar ordered that both be offered to the Lord and then distributed equally among the devotees who had gathered there. The rich devotee realised his mistake and fell at the Jīyar's feet asking for his forgiveness.

Even when the Jīyar was at Madhurāntakam, he felt that his health was failing, and promptly appointed Lālāpeṭṭai Vajram Svāmī to look after the *nityārādhana* of the Lord who later appointed Iḷanagar Gadādharapuram Śrī Cakravarti Svāmī to succeed him. The Jīyar attained *paramapada* in the year Durmukhi, in the month of Mārgaḷi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa saptamī tithi (29.12.1836). He ruled over the pontificate for three years and five months. It is to be noted

1 *Ācārya Vaibhavam*, p. 320.

here that the 33rd and 34th Jīyars who were to follow had great respect for this Jīyar's erudition and resorted to his holy feet for guidance, many a time.

The Jīyar's Bṛndāvanam is at Madhurāntakam.

His Taniyan reads as under:-

श्रीवासरङ्गपतिवीररघूद्वहादिवेदान्तसंयमिवरैर्गुरुसार्वभौमैः ।
संप्रेक्षितं करुणया परिपूर्णबोधं श्रीरङ्गनाथशठकोपमुनिं भजामः ॥

29. *Śrī Parāṅkuśa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Lālāpeṭṭai in Vajram family in the month of Caitra under the star Citrā. He became the pontifical head in the year Durmukhi in the month of Kārthigai, on Śuklapakṣa navamī tithi (17.11.1836).

This Svāmī proceeded from Madhurāntakam to Kāñcī, Tiruppuṭkuḻi, and then to Tiruppārkaḍal on the banks of the river Pālār. Finding his health to be deteriorating, he decided to stay there permanently. He called upon Iḷanagar Gadādharapuram Cakravartiy ̃ācāriar Svāmī to become the pontifical head. Obeying the Ācārya's command, he took to *saṁnyāsāśrama* under the name of *Śrīnivāsa Vedānta Mahādeśika.*

The 29th Jīyar wrote the Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁhasuprabhātam. When he was at Tiruppārkaḍal, the Svāmī fell ill and passed away. He attained *paramapada* in the year Heviḷambi in the month of Mārgaḻi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa

caturdaśī tithi (10.12.1837). He ruled over the pontificate for one year and one month. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tiruppārkaḍal.

His Taniyan reads as follows:-

विद्याम्भोधिपराङ्कुशाख्ययतिराट् श्रीवासरङ्गाधिप-
श्रीमद्वीररघूद्वहश्रुतिशिरोयोगीश्वरैरन्वहम्।
रङ्गाधीशशठारिसंयमिवरैश्चालोकितं सादरं
विद्यावारिनिधिं पराङ्कुशयतीन्द्राख्यं मुनीन्द्रं भजे॥

30. *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Vedānta Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Ḷanagar Gadādharapuram in Śrīvatsa Gotra in the month of Mārgaḷi, under star Viśākhā. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Vidvān Cakravartiyācārya. He became the pontifical head in the year Durmukhi in the month of Paṅguni on Śuklapakṣa navamī tithi (15.3.1837).

This Svāmī proceeded from Tiruppārkaḍal to Kāñcī, Śrīperumbūdūr, Tiruvaḷḷūr, Tirunindravūr, Tiruvallikkeṇi, Tirunīrmalai, Tiruvidavendai, Madhurāntakam, Tirvahīndrapuram, and then to Kumbhakoṇam. There, he presented a golden *kavaca* to Lord Ārāvamudan.

Then he visited Pullambūtaṅguḍi and Ādanūr and stayed for sometime at Nṛsiṁhapuram. He was instrumental in constructing the *bṛndāvanams* for his *purvācāryas* who were enshrined there.

This Svāmī has ten compositions to his credit. He wrote *Śrī Nṛsiṁhamaṅgalāśāsana*, *Śrī Nṛsiṁhamaṅgalam*, *Śrī Raṅganāthamaṅgalam*,

Śrī Śrīnivāsamaṅgalam, Śrī Gitācāryan maṅgalam, Śrī Śārṅgapāṇi maṅgalam,[1] *Śrī Lakṣmīnṛsiṁha Suprabhāt͡am, Śrī Raṅganātha Suprabhāt͡am, Śrī Śrīnivāsa Suprabhāt͡am,* and *Śrī Lakṣmīnṛsiṁha Prapatti.* This Svāmī's *Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha Suprabhāt͡am* is included in the *Nityānusandhānam* of the Ahobila Maṭha till this day.

This Jīyar then visited the *divyadeśas* in the Southern districts and returned to Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram and settled down there. He attained *paramapada* in the year Śubhakṛt in the month of Puraṭṭāśi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa caturthī tithi (27.9.1842). He ruled over the pontificate for five years and six months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Nṛsiṁhapuram.

His Taniyan reads as follows:-

श्रीवासरङ्गपतिवीररघूद्वहादिवेदान्तदेशिकपराङ्कुशलक्ष्मणार्यैः ।
संप्रेक्षितं करुणया परिपूर्णबोधं श्रीश्रीनिवासनिगमान्तगुरुं भजामः ॥

31. ***Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Svāmī was born in Śrīraṅgam in the Viñjimūr family, in the month of Kārtigai under star Makhā. He became the pontifical head in the year Śubhakṛt in the month of Kārtigai on Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi (7.12.1842).

1 See *Satsampradāya muktāvali*, p. 162.

He proceeded from Nṛsiṁhapuram to Ādanūr, Pullambūtaṅguḍi, Kumbhakoṇam, Kāñcī and Tiruvallūr. There he ordered for a silver elephant vehicle to be made for the Lord Vīrarāghava, which could be taken out during the Lord's procession on festival days. Then, the Svāmī proceeded to Tirumala, Colasiṁhapuram, Śrīperumbūdūr, Tirunindravūr, Tiruvallikkeṇi, and *via* Tiruvahīndrapuram he came to Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram. There he gave discourses on *ubhaya vedānta* texts to his disciples. It was then that he wrote two works - *Śrī Nṛsiṁha maṅgalam* and *Sāṅgaprapatti niṣṭhā.*

Desirous of solitude, the Svāmī proceeded to a small hamlet on the banks of river Kāverī called Tyāgarājapuram and settled down there, worshipping Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha. The Svāmī attained *paramapada* in the year Parābhava, in the month of Pañguṇi on Śuklapakṣa caturdaśī tithi (30.3.1847). He ruled over the pontificate for four years and four months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tyāgarājapuram.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीरङ्गनाथयतिवर्यकृपात्तबोधं श्रीवासवेदशिखरार्यदयावलम्बम्।
वैराग्यभक्तिमुखसद्गुणसागरं श्रीनारायणश्रुतिशिरोगुरुमाश्रयामः॥

32. ***Śrī Vīrarāghava Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Svāmī was born in Śrīvilliputtūr, in the month of Caitra under star Pūraṭṭādi. Since his native place was Ādanūr, this Svāmī was popularly

known as Ādanūr Aḻagiyasiṅgar. He became the pontifical head in the year Parābhava in the month of Paṅguni on Śukalapakṣa pañcamī tithi (30.3.1847).

This Svāmī proceeded from Tyāgarājapuram to Kumbhakoṇam and then to Pullambūtaṅguḍi, Ādanūr and then to Śrīraṅgam, Āḻvār Tirunagari and the nine southern Tirupatis, Vānamāmalai, Tirukkuṛuṅguḍi, Madurai, Madhurāntakam and Kāñcī. Here, he visited the eighteen satellite *divyadeśa*s around Kāñcī and then proceeded to Tirunārāyaṇapuram via Tirupputkuḻi. He stayed for sometime there doing *maṅgaḷāśāsana* to Lord and Śrī. The local king Śrī Kṛṣṇarāja Kaṇṭhīrava Sārvabhauma sent an invitation to the Jīyar to visit Mysore. The Jīyar complied with his request and stayed for sometime at Mysore accepting royal patronage. Later, he proceeded to Colasiṁhapuram and Tirumala and then decided to settle down at Tiruvallūr, because of his age.[1]

The Svāmī chose as his successor a learned pandit well-versed in the *Bhāṣya* and *Rahasya Granthas* called Parandūr Vaṅgīpuram Vedānta Tātācārya Svāmī, who was hardly 26 years of age. He was initiated into the *saṁnyāsāśrama* and was named Śrī Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika. The elder Jīyar attained *paramapada* in the year Pramādīca in the month of

1 This Svāmī was quite old (*vayo-vṛddha*) when he became the pontifical head and was affectionately called 'Tātā-Svāmī' or grandfather because of his age. See *Ācārya vaibhavam*, p. 329.

Puraṭṭāsi on Śuklapakṣa caturthī tithi (30.10.1853). He ruled over the pontificate for 6 years and 7 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tiruvallūr.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीवासरङ्गपतिवीररघूद्वहादि वेदान्तमानिलयवेदशिरोयतीन्द्रैः।
संप्रेक्षितं करुणया परिपूर्णबोधं श्रीवीरराघवयतीन्द्रगुरुं भजामः॥

33. *Śrī Saṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Parandūr village in Vaṅgīpuram family in the month of Puraṭṭāsi, under star Viśākhā. He was popularly known as Vaṅgīpuram Vidvān Śrī Vedāntācārya Svāmī in his *pūrvāśrama*. He was initated into asceticism and became the pontifical head in the year Pramādīca in the month of Āvaṇi on the 10th day of the Śuklapakṣa (12.9.1853).

After assuming the office of the pontificate, he proceeded from Tiruvallūr to Śrīperumbūdūr, Madhurāntakam, Tirukkovalūr, Tiruvahīndrapuram, Tiruccitrakūṭam, Śrīmuṣṇam, Kumbhakoṇam, Tiruviṇṇagar, Pullambūtaṅguḍi, Ādanūr, and Śrī Ṇsiṁhapuram. He stayed there for sometime worshipping at the Bṛndāvanam of his *pūrvācāryas*.[1]

He then proceeded on a tour of South India, going up to Rāmeśvaram and then to Śrīraṅgam. Later, he proceeded to Tirunārāyaṇapuram and visited the Bṛndāvanam of Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī . He then visited

1 The Bṛndāvanams of his three *pūrvācārvas* 25th, 26th & 30th Jīyars are at Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram.

Coḷasiṁhapuram and returned to Tiruvaḷḷūr. This Jīyar seemed to have followed this itinerary thrice in his lifetime. He is said to have blessed thousands of devotees, performing *samāśrayaṇa* and accepting *bharanyāsa* for those who resorted to his holy feet. He is also said to have given discourses on *Śrībhāṣya* and *Rahasya-granthas*.

It goes to the credit of this Svāmī for having built a *sannidhi* for Svāmī Deśika and installing his idol at Nāgapaṭṭinam. In his scholastic erudition, he was placed on par with Rāmānuja, Deśika, Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī, Ṣaṣṭha Parāṅkuśa and Śrīnivāsa Yatīndra Mahādeśika. He was instrumental in adorning the Lord and Śrī at Tiruvaḷḷūr with new ornaments, and acquiring landed property for the temple there. He ordered the construction of a big building for Ahobila Maṭha there. His style of delivering lectures and the comparative ease with which he outclassed and won over his opponents in literary and philosophical debates, attracted the masses to him.

An incident[1] is related in his pontifical rule which makes interesting reading and bears testimony to the Svāmī's divine charisma. While on a tour of the modern Karnataka State, the Svāmī and his entourage were confronted by a group of dacoits in the thick jungle. The Svāmī is said to have informed the dacoit leader that he could take whatever valuables he wished, but only

1 *Ācārya vaibhavam*, p. 333.

after the Jīyar performed the *ḍolotsava* to Lord Kṛṣṇa. To this, the dacoit leader agreed and even while the *maṅgalārati* was being performed to the Lord, the dacoit leader and his gang shouted and wailed as if in great pain. The Svāmī then ordered the holy water to be sprinkled on the dacoits. Only after this, they were pacified and it came to be known through the dacoits leader that during the *pūjā* they seemed to be attacked by hordes of lions and the holy water drove them away. The dacoits then fell at the Jīyar's feet begging for forgiveness.

The Jīyar seems to have enjoyed the royal patronage of the Mahāraja of Mysore. The Āsthāna Vidvān of the Mysore Kingdom was one Rāma Śastri who underrating the Jīyar's erudition by his youth, invited him to a literary debate[1], without paying due respect to the Jīyar. But, the *Āsthāna vidvān* was easily defeated and he fell at the Jīyar's feet requesting his pardon for misjudging his scholastic achievements.

The Jīyar wrote the *Guruparamparā* of the Ahobila Maṭha titled *Satsampradāya Muktāvali*, based on the *Ācārya Guṇādarśa* and *Sat Sampradāyasāra* by the earlier Jīyars. He had also written almost half of his autobiography in that book. One of his disciples Tiruvallūr Thaṭṭai Kṛṣṇamācārya was instrumental in publishing that work.

1 *Ācārya vaibhavam*, p. 335.

He was very popular among the literary cliches of his era because of his interesting philosophical discourses. He was visited often by one Vidvān Tirupputkuzhi Svāmī who used to discuss matters of current interest with him. He donated a sum of Rupees ten thousand for making a golden chariot for Lord Devarāja at Kāñcī which was finished during his life-time.

The Svāmī attained *paramapada* in the year Pramādi in the month of Āvaṇi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa daśamī tithi (10.9.1879). He ruled over the pontificate for 26 years. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tiruvallūr.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीरङ्गनाथशठकोपयतीन्द्रपाद-पङ्केरुहप्रवणचित्तमुदारबोधम्।
श्रीवीरराघवयतीन्द्रकृपावलम्बं श्रीमच्छठारियतिशेखरमाश्रयामः॥

34. *Śrī Śaṭhakopa Rāmānuja Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in the village of Attipaṭṭu in his uncle's house in the year Śrīmukha in the month of Kārthigai under star Uttarāḍam (November, 1813).

His paternal grandfather belonged to Injimeḍu village and had the title of Māḍabhuṣi. This Svāmī was brought up at his maternal grandparents' place at Attipaṭṭu and hence he became known as Attipaṭṭu Jīyar. Reference is made to this Svāmī in the book *Sārabodhinī*, a commentary on *Śrīmad Rahasyatrayasāra* by the 42nd Jīyar. The relevant *maṅgalaśloka* reads as under:

स्तुतिपुलकाङ्कितगात्रं नृहरेर्बाष्पाम्बुना लसन्नेत्रम्।
वन्दे शठरिपुरामावरजमुनीन्द्रं मदीयकुलनाथम्॥

The Svāmī's *pūrvāśrama* name was Vidvān Māḍabūṣi Śrīnivāsa-rāghavācārya Svāmī. In accordance to the wish of his Ācārya Śrī Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra he donned the ochre robes and became the pontifical head in the year Pramādīca in the month of Āvaṇi in Kṛṣṇapakṣa ekādaśī tithi (12.9.1879) on his 61st birthday.

This Svāmī is described as *Vayovṛddha* (old in age) *Jñānavṛddha* (ripe in knowledge) and *Śīlavṛddha* (perfect in conduct) by his disciples.[1] He was a *pañcakāla-parāyaṇa* and an epitome of a *paramaikāntin*. He was popularly called Ṛṣi Svāmī because he had learnt all the four *Vedas*. He has many works to his credit. They are as follows:

Śrī Nṛsiṁhaṣaṣṭipādavārṇanam, *Adhikaraṇa Sārāvali Vyākhyāna*, *Nyāsaviṁśati Vyākhyāna*, *Sāmānyaviśeṣādinyāyasaṅgraha*, *Kavihṛdaya-rañjanī*, *Aikaśāstryasamarthana*, *Ānantya- nirṇaya*, *Brahmasūtrārtha- mañjarī*, *Maṇipravāḷa Gītāvyākhyānam*, *Sāradīpikāhṛdayam*, *Vīkṣāraṇya māhātmyam*, *Maṇipravāḷa Vyākhyāna* on *Nāl̂āirappadi*, *Tiruevvuḷ vāimoḷi* in *Tamil*, *Aḍaikakalappattu* for *Śrī Lakṣmi Nṛsiṁha*, *Kiṅgṛheśa stuti*, and *Vedagiri Varṇanam*.

1 *Ācārya vaibhavam*, p. 338.

The *Aḍaikkalapattu* on Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha is being recited daily in the worship of the Lord in the Ahobila Maṭha as also in the houses of *Śrīsannidhi* disciples. Interesting anecdotes are related extolling the Svāmī's *prabhāva* and *sākṣātkāra* of Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha.[1] The following *śloka* was also prevalent in the Jīyar's time regarding his *saulabhya* (easy accessibility).

न चलति निजवर्णधर्मतो यः सममतिरात्मसुहृद्विपक्षपक्षे।
न हरति न च हन्ति किञ्चिदुच्चैः सितमनसं तमवेहि विष्णुभक्तम्॥

The Jīyar stayed at Tiruvallūr for sometime. Because of his failing health he could not go on religious tours, though he wished to visit many *divyadeśas*. During his stay at Tiruvallūr he decked the Lord Vīrarāghava with many ornaments and also ordered a golden chariot to be made for the Lord which could be used during festival times. The Jīyar Svāmī used to call Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha as Mahāsvāmī and Lord Vīrarāghava as Māsvāmī (*Mā* meaning 'mine or my' in Telugu, *Mā* also means Lakṣmī and *Mā* meaning the offering of sweet flour to the Lord on (*amāvasyā*) the new moon day). It is to be noted that the rituals of worship (*pūjākrama*) as devised by this Svāmī (viz., *kaṭṭiyam*, *eccharika* and *anugraha*) are still being adhered to, for Lord Vīrarāghava.

1 Śrī Puriśai Naḍāḍūr Kṛṣṇamācārya Svāmī has recalled two instances from the Svāmīs life which he had heard from his *pūrvācāryas*. *Ācārya vaibhavam*, pp. 340 -346.

The 37th Jīyar Śrī Pillaipākkam Svāmī and the 41st Jīyar resorted to this Svāmī's holy feet for refuge. The former wrote the *Ācārya Saptati* and the latter *Mahāsvāmigadyam*, in praise of this Jīyar.

Having adorned the pontifical throne with great prowess, the Svāmī attained *paramapada* in the year Citrabhānu, in the month of Puraṭṭāśi on Kṛṣṇapakṣa daśamī tithi (5.10.1882). He ruled over the pontificate for three years and one month. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tiruvallūr.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीमद्वीररघूद्वहश्रुतिशिरोरङ्गेशकार्यात्मज-
श्रीवासश्रुतिमौलियोगिशठजिद्योगीशवीक्षास्पदम्।
विख्यातं शमधीदमादिसुगुणैराढ्यं विपश्चित्तमं
वन्दे श्रीशठकोपलक्ष्मणमुनिं वैराग्यवाराकरम्॥

35. *Śrī Raṅganātha Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Ponvilainda Kaḷathūr in Chingleput district in Bhāradvāja Gotra of Vaṅgīpuram family in the month of Vaikāśi under star Keṭṭai. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Vidvān Nṛsiṁhācārya. He was entrusted with the job of looking after the daily rituals in Śrī Sannidhi in the time of Attippaṭṭu Jīyar.

Obeying his Ācārya's command, this Svāmī took to *saṁnyāsāśrama* in the year Citrabhānu in the month of Puraṭṭāśi (3.10.1982). He was well

versed in *Tarka śāstra* and was an expert in delivering lectures on *Śrībhāṣya* and other Vedāntic texts.

After staying for sometime in Tiruvallūr, the Jīyar started on his religious tour, proceeding to Tirumala, Tirupati, Tirunindravūr, Tiruvallikkeṇi, Śrīperumbūdūr, Kāñcī and then to Tūppul. He also visited all the *agrahāras* in and around Kāñcī and then returned to Tiruvallūr. It was during this Jīyar's time that *saṁprokṣaṇa* was done to the Lord Vīrarāghava temple at Tiruvallūr.

The Jīyar was of a generous disposition and no one who came to visit him and pay his respects went empty handed.[1] The Jīyar is said to have done *samāśrayaṇa* to the 42nd Jīyar (of Iñjimeḍu) Vidvān Tirukkoṭṭiyūr Svāmī. It is also said that Pillaippākkam Jīyar (37th Jīyar) looked after the affairs of the Maṭha during the Jīyar's pontifical period.

He attained *paramapada* in the year Sarvadhāri in the month of Āḍi on Śuklapakṣa caturthī tithi (10.8.1888). He ruled over the pontificate for 5 years and 10 months. His Bṛndāvanam is at Tiruvallūr.

1 Śrī Puriśai Naḍāḍūr Kṛṣṇamācārya Svāmī relates a couple of incidents in the Jīyar's pontifical period illustrating his generosity. See *Ācārya vaibhavam*, pp. 349-350.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीमच्छ्रीवीररघ्वीट्श्रुतिमकुटगुरुत्तंसपादाब्जभृङ्गं
श्रीमच्छ्रीरङ्गभूभृल्लठमथनगुरोर्लब्धवेदान्तयुग्मम्।
श्रीमन्नारायणाब्धिश्रुतिशिखरशठारातिरामानुजार्य-
प्रेक्षापात्रं भजामो गुरुवरमनघं रङ्गनाथं यतीन्द्रम्॥

36. *Śrī Śrīnivāsa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Kāñcī district at Parandūr in the month of Āḍi under star Puṣya. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Vidvān Vaṅgīpuram Raṅgācārya Svāmī. He became the pontifical head in the month of Āḍi in the year Sarvadhārī under star Svāti (13.8.1888).[1]

He stayed for sometime at Tiruvallūr, worshipping the Lord there and giving discourses on the *Śrīvaiṣṇava* religion and philosophy to his disciples. He was the brother of the 33rd Jīyar in his *pūrvāśrama* and was a famous exponent of *Śrībhāṣya* during his times.[2] The Jīyar visited the following

1 There was a legal controversy in the appointment of this Jīyar. His predecessor, the 35th Jīyar (Kalathūr Svāmī) attained *paramapada* without appointing a successor. The 36th Jīyar was appointed by the disciples of the Ahobila Maṭha who were gathered at Tiruvallūr. Some of the disciples who were located outside Tiruvallūr desired to install the well-known pandit of Coladeśa, Śrī Sattarka Vācaspati Kurucci Raṅgācārya Svāmī and hence filed a case in the High Court. However the judgement was in favour of Parandūr Svāmī and the problem was legally resolved.The related case and the ensuing judgement are recorded in the corresponding *Law Journal*. See *Ācārya vaibhavam*, p. 353.

2 It is stated that when this Jīyar attained *paramapada* Śrīmuṣnam Śrī Svarṇam Kṛṣṇamācārya Svāmī is believed to have said that *Śrībhāṣyam* itself is 'dead and gone'. See *Ācārya vaibhavam*, p. 353.

divyadesas Śrīperumbūdūr, Kāñcī, Madurantakam, Tiruahindrapuram, Kumbhakoṇam, Pullambūtaṅguḍi, Ādanūr, and Śrīraṅgam. He was respected for his depth of knowledge in *Tarka śāstra*, *Vedānta śāstra* and *Śrībhāṣya*.

The Jīyar proceeded to Pādūr at the request of his disciples and stayed for sometime there lecturing on Vedānta Philosophy. He attained *paramapada* in the year Viḷambi in the month of Mārgaḷi, on pūrṇimā tithi (27.12.1898). The Jīyar's Bṛndāvanam is in the western *prākāra* of the Pādūr temple. His idol has been installed there by the 40th Jīyar later. He ruled over the pontificate for 10 years and 4 months.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीनारायणवेदमौलियतिराट्पादारविन्दाश्रयं
ख्यातश्रीशठकोपदेशिकमणेर्लब्धागमान्तद्वयम्।
श्रीमद्ब्रह्मधुरीणयोगिचरणन्यस्तात्मरक्षाभरं
सेवे श्रीनिधियोगिवर्यमनघं निर्बाधबोधोदयम्॥

37. *Śrī Vīrarāghava Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Pillaippākkam near Śrīperumbūdūr in the year Krodhi in the month of Māśi (March 1845) under star Puṣya. His father's name was Vīrarāghavācārya Svāmī, belonging to the famous Komāṇḍūr Ḷayavalli family. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Gopālācārya and he learnt the *ubhayavedānta* at the feet of his father. He had his *pañcasaṁskāra* done by the famous Tiruppuṭkuḷi Svāmī (Mahāmahopādhyāya Kṛṣṇa Tātācārya). Completing *Adhyātma śāstra* first under the 33rd Jīyar, he studied next under

the 34th Jīyar. Recognising his erudiction, the 34th Jīyar (Atthipaṭṭu Aḻagiasiṅgar) appointed him as the *Śrīkaryam* of the Ahobila Maṭha which post he continued under the 35th Jīyar also. He had his *prapatti* done by the 34th Jīyar. He learnt *Divyaprabandham* from a *Paramaikāntin* Śrī Śaṭhakopācārya of Kāyār.

Then he proceeded to the *divyadeśas* of the South doing *maṅgalāśāsana* to the Āḻvārs en route. He participated in the Brahmotsava at Āḻvār Tirunagarī during the month of Māsi. He developed *vairāgya* and distaste for worldly life and had his *āpatsaṁnyāsa* (immediate asceticism) done by his Bhagavadviṣaya Ācārya Pūvirundavalli Śrīnivāsarāghavācārya Svāmī. He had his *preṣamantropadeśa* from Teṅkanikoṭṭai Svāmī at Tiruvaḻlūr in the year Heviḻambi in the month of Āḍi on pūrinimā tithi under star Uttarāṣāḍha and was conferred the name of *Śrī Vīrarāghava Śaṭhakopa*. After the *Saṅkalpamahotsava*, the Svāmī proceeded to Kāñcī. He came to know that the 36th Jīyar had attained *paramapada* and complying to the request of his disciples he became the pontifical head in the year Viḻambi in the month of Thai (31.1.1899).

The Jīyar proceeded to Tiruvahīndrapuram where he restored the *utsavas* in the temple after settling the dispute among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas there.[1]

1 *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*, Twelfth Annual Number, English edition, p. 35.

He remained there to supervise the *Brahmotsava* in the temple and has documented his experiences in a beautiful record named *Vedāntadeśikotsava Vaibhavam* for the sake of posterity. Later, he proceeded to Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram where he took ill suddenly and attained *paramapada* in the year Vikāri in the month of Mārgaḻi on pūrnimā tithi (16.12.1899). This Svāmī did not nominate his successor and hence there was an interregnum for about five and a half years between 1899-1905. The Jīyar's Bṛndāvanam is at Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram. He ruled over the pontificate for eleven months.

His Taniyan reads as under:

अस्त्यत्रैको विशेषो बुध इति शठजिल्लक्ष्मणाभ्यां मुनिभ्यां
एकीभूयोदिताभ्यामिव निरुपधिकं प्रेक्षितं सद्गुरुभ्याम्।
वेदान्तद्वन्द्वमन्त्रत्रयविवृतिमुखे शिक्षितं क्षान्तिमुख्यैः
आद्यं श्रीवीरराघ्वीट्शठमथनगुरुं संयमीन्द्रं भजामि॥

38. ***Śrī Śrīnivāsa Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika***

This Svāmī was born in the year Siddhārthi in the month of Thai on Śukla dvādaśī under star Tiruvādirai (Janurary 1860) at Kumbhakoṇam. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Tirukkuḍantai Iḷanagar Gadādharapuram Śrīvatsāṅka Vidvān Cakravarthi Veṅkaṭācārya Svāmī. He was well-versed in *Tarkaśāstra* and had the good fortune of delivering lectures on *Vedānta* in the immediate presence of the 37th Jīyar and won accolades from him. As there was an interregnum of five and half years between the previous Jīyar and this Jīyar, the daily rituals of the Maṭha were carried out by the Śrīkāryam svāmī.

The disciples appealed to the Government to appoint a head to the Ahobila Maṭha. The British Governor ordered the preparation of electoral rolls of the Maṭha's disciples and after the casting of votes, it was found that the majority favoured the Gadādharapuram Svāmī to be the head of the Maṭha.

The Maṭha rose once again to become the centre of influence and revered seat of learning. The Jīyar became the pontifical head in the year Viśvāvasu in the month of Āḍi in pūrṇimā tithi under star Uttarāḍham (17.7.1905) at Nṛsiṁhapuram. He stayed for sometime there enlightening his disciples on *Granthacatuṣṭaya* and doing *pañcasaṁskāra* and *prapatti* to his devotees. He proceeded on *sañcāra* to Pullambūtaṅguḍi, Ādanūr, Kumbhakoṇam, Tiruviṇṇagar, Teraḻundūr, Tiruviṇḍalūr, Tirukkaṇḍiyūr, Tanjore, Appakūḍaṭhān, Anbil, Vaḍuvūr, Tiruppuliyūr and Tirukkaṇṇapuram.

A devotee from north named Bālamukundācārya became his disciple and it was with his help that the Uttara Ahobila Maṭha was established at Puṣkaram. He also renovated a number of Maṭha-buildings and Bṛndāvanams of previous Jīyars. Knowing that his end was nearing, he appointed a learned Vyākaraṇa Vidvān Raṅgācārya Svāmī as his successor. He attained *paramapada* in the year Saumya, in the month of Citra, on Kṛṣṇapakṣa aṣṭamī tithi (12.5.1909). His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrī Nṛsiṁhapuram. His idol was installed by the 40th Jīyar later. There are two available works about this Jīyar. They are *Śrīnivasa Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika gadyam* by

Kārakkurichi Vaṅgīpuram Vidvān and *Vaibhava Prakāśikā* by Vaṅgīpuram Raṅgācārya Svāmī.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीमच्छठारिशठजिद्यतिधुर्यवीररघ्वीट्छठारियतिशेखरदेशिकेन्द्रैः ।
संप्रेक्षितं करुणया परिपूर्णबोधं श्रीश्रीनिवासशठकोपमुनिं भजामः ॥

39. *Śrī Parāṅkuśa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Rājamannārkoil (Mannārguḍi) in Urupatthūr Cakravarti family in the monrh of Viśākhā under star Bharaṇi. He became the pontifical head in the year Saumya, in the month of Viśākhā on Śuklapakṣa dvitīyā tithi (21.5.1909). He was known in his *pūrvāśrama* as Vyākaraṇa Raṅgācārya. He took to the ochre robes at the instance of the 38th Jīyar. He visited Pullambūtaṅguḍi Ādanūr, and Rājamannārkoil. He renovated the Maṭha at Mannārguḍi and was instrumental in making a silver *maṇḍapa* for Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha. He also ordered the construction of the northern wall at the temple of Lord Vīrarāghava at Tiruvallūr. He performed *pañcasaṁskāra* and *bharanyāsa* to his devotees and gave lectures on philosophy and religion as propounded in the *granthacatuṣṭaya*.

Feeling that his health was failing, he called upon Kārakkuricci Vidvān Veṅkaṭakṛṣṇamācārya Svāmī to take to the ascetic order and succeed him. He named his successor Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭhakopa. He attained *paramapada* in the year Rākṣasa in the month of Viśākhā in Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi

(20.5.1915). His Bṛndāvanam is at Mannārguḍi. He ruled the pontificate for six years.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीवीरराघवयतीन्द्रपदाब्जभृङ्गं श्रीमच्छठारियतिवर्यं कृपात्तबोधम्।
श्री श्रीनिवासशठजिद्यतिधुर्यवीक्षापात्रं परांकुशयतीन्द्रगुरुं भजामः॥

40. *Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Kārakkuricci Agrahāram on the banks of the river Tāmraparaṇī in the Vaṅgīpuram family in the year Virodhikṛt in the month of Mārgaḻi under star Viśākhā. He became the pontifical head in the year Pramādica in the month of Caitra under star Puṣya (17.4.1913). After the 39th Jīyar attained *paramapada* in May 1915, this Svāmī proceeded on his *divyadeśasañcāra* to Śrīraṅgam, Āḻvār Tirunagari, Tirumāliruñjolai and then proceeded to Hyderabad.

During that period, Ahobilam had become inaccessible because of the fear of dacoits and evil spirits. It should be said to the credit of this Svāmī that he was able to allay these fears of the devotees by his *mantric* powers. He visited Ahobilam and performed worship to the *Nava Nṛsiṁhas* there. Many devotees resorted to his holy feet for freedom from miseries of this world and bliss in the world thereafter. He ordered many gold and silver vessels to be made, which were utilised for the worship of the Lord. He built Maṭhas at many places and was instrumental in making the Maṭha rich and prosperous.

He wrote the *Maṇipravāla Dīpikā* which elucidates in simple term, the philosophical truths found in the *Śrībhāṣya*. He also wrote the *Satsampradāya Prakāśikā* and *Śrībhāṣya dūṣaṇaparihāra.*[1] He also established an *Agrahāra* called *Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭhakopapuram*. Many treatises have been written extolling the Jīyar's erudition - *Yatīndra Guṇadarpaṇa*, *Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika Śatakam* and *Paramācārya Navaka*. His devotion to Lord Nrsiṁha earned accolades for him from his disciples who lovingly called him "Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha Divya Pādukā Sevaka."

He visited Tirumala, Tirunārāyaṇapuram, Madurai and Tuvarimān. Realising that his health was failing, he called upon one of his disciples, Śrī Gopāla Rāmabhadrācārya Svāmī to succeed him as the pontifical head. He attained *paramapada* in the year Dundubhi, in the month of Thai on Kṛṣṇapakṣa trayodaśi tithi (14.1.1923). His Bṛndāvanam is at Tuvarimān *agrahara*. He ruled the pontificate for 9 years and 9 months.

His Taniyan reads as under :

श्रीमच्छठारियतिशेखरलब्धबोधं श्रीरङ्गनाथयतिधुर्यकृपैकपात्रम्।
श्रीमत्पराङ्कुशयतीन्द्रदयावलम्बं श्रीरङ्गनाथशठकोपमुनिं भजामः॥

1 All these works are published.

41. *Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Kārakkuricci *agrahāram* in Vādhūla gotra in the year Ānanda in the month of Mārgaḻi under Pūrattādi star (Dec. 1854). His *pūrvāśrama* name was Taṭṭai Gopāla Rāmabhadrācārya Svāmī. He became the pontifical head in the year Dundubi in the month of Thai (17.1.1923). He was the oldest Jīyar to became the pontifical head of Ahobila Maṭha. It is to be noted that even at this advanced age, this Svāmī performed his daily duties (*nityakarmas*) to perfection. He gave religious discourses on the *granthacatuṣtaya* as also on *Nyāyasiddhāñjana* and *Śatadūṣaṇī*. He travelled from Tuvarimān up to Rāmeśvaram in the South and Tirumala in the North. Taking into consideration his age and the prevailing mode of transport and poor road conditions, his *divyadeśa sañcāra* performing *maṅgalāśāsana* to the Lord and doing *pañcasaṁskāra* should be commended. He has authored the following works: *Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha Dhyānasopāna*, *Śrī Vedapādādīśastava*, *Daśāvatāra Vedapādastava*, *Nityaprārthanākārikāvali*, *Ācāryadinacaryā* and *Śrī Mahāsvāmigadya* (on the 34th Jīyar).

The Jīyar was able to acquire nearly two and a half lakh Rupees worth of land for the Ahobila Maṭha. He ordered the construction of new buildings for Ahobila Maṭha at Tirumala, Tiruppullāni and Vaḍuvūr. He installed the idols of the 33rd and 34th Jīyars in the silver *maṇḍapa*. He also installed the idol of 40th Jīyar and also his own image at Tiruvallūr. He also made anew

the Śrī Śaṭhāri in the silver *maṇṭapa*. Finding his health to be failing, he appointed Māḍabhūśi Iñjimeḍu Vidvān Raṅganāthācārya as his successor after initiating him into the ascetic order with full honours. He was named Śrī Raṅga Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika. However, he recovered soon and for nearly 13 years both the Jīyars adorned the Ahobila Maṭha. He attained *paramapada* on Śuklapakṣa pañcamī tithi. His Bṛndāvanam is at *Daśāvatāra sannidhi* at Śrīraṅgam.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीमच्छठारिशठकोपयतीन्द्रराङ्घ्रि-कार्यात्मजातमुनिभिः गुरुसार्वभौमैः ।
संप्रेक्षितं करुणया परिपूर्णबोधं लक्ष्मीनृसिंहशठकोपमुनिं भजामः ॥

42. *Śrī Śrīraṅga Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Iñjimeḍu in Bhāradvāja Gotra in the year Bahudhānya in the month of Thai under star Uttarāṣāḍha (21.1.1879). He was known in his *pūrvāśrama* as Vidvān Iñjimeḍu Raṅganāthācārya. He had his Vedāntic teachings under Śrīmuṣṇam Svāmī (Svarṇam Kṛṣṇamācārya Svāmī) and had *bharanyāsa* done by him. In recognition of this Svāmī's erudition he was appointed as the *Āsthāna vidvān* by the 41st Jīyar. Under instructions from his *guru*, he wrote *sampradāya granthas* like *Uktiniṣṭhābharaṇam*, *Nyāsaniṣṭhāmīmāṁsā* and also *vyākhyāna* on the *Rahasyatrayasāra* called the *Sārabodhinī*. He also wrote *śrāddhamantrabhāṣyam*, *Upākarmanirṇaya*, *Kṛtlīkālīpanirṇaya*, *Śrīvaiṣṇavasadācāranirṇaya* and *Gītārthasaṅgra-*

havyākhyāna. He wrote a *bhūmikā* (Preface) for *Tattvaṭīkā* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita Kośa* (a dictionary of Viśiṣṭādvaita terms). He was initiated into asceticism in the year Śukla in the month of Caitra (April 1929). He became the pontifical head in the year *Viśu*, in the month of *Aippaśi* (24.10.1941). He was instrumental in establishing a Vedapāṭhaśālā at Madhurāntakam and also bringing out a monthly journal of Ahobila Maṭha, *Śrī Nṛsiṁhapriyā* and in establishing a Maṭha at Bombay. The Veda Pāṭhaśālā has since developed into a famous centre of learning and is flourishing well in present day, and is sought after by young students eager to learn the Vedas. The Monthly Journal is having a wide circulation in the present day. The Chief Editor of the journal is the Ahobila Maṭha Jīyar and his editorial provides interesting reading to students of philosophy and religion and laymen alike. The Ahobila Maṭha at Bombay (Chembūr) is the centre of attraction to the Maṭha's devotees there, and is flourishing well under the patronage of Śrīvaiṣṇava *Śrīsannidhiśiṣyas*.

He travelled from Śrīraṅgam to Hyderabad and then to Tirunārāyaṇapuram, Kāñcī and Tiruvallūr. Finding that his health was failing, he appointed Paruthipaṭṭu Vaṅgīpuram Vidvān Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁhācārya Svāmī as his successor who was formally initiated into the ascetic fold in Vikṛti year in the month of Thai (7.2.1951). For two years both the Jīyars adorned the Ahobila Maṭha and enlightened the disciples in Śrīvaiṣṇava Sampradāya. The

elder Jīyar attained *paramapada* in the year Nandana, in the month of Māsi in Kṛṣṇapakṣa prathamā tithi (1.3.1953). His Bṛndāvanam is at Tiruvallūr. He ruled the pontificate for twentyfour years and one month.

Śrī Pādūr Purāṇam Svāmī (Śrī Rāghavācārya) has written a work called *Vaibhava Sudhā* in 500 verses about this Svāmī.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीरंगेशयतीन्दुना करुणयासौ स्यादिति प्रेक्षितं
ख्यातश्रीनरसिंहकारिजमुनीट्पादांबुजेन्दिन्दिरम्।
दान्तिक्षान्तिदयादिभिः शुभगुणैर्भान्तं बुधाग्रेसरं
श्रीमद्रङ्गशठारियोगिनृपतिं श्रेयोनिधिं संश्रये॥

43. *Śrī Vīrarāghava Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born to Devanārvilāham Vidvān Paruthipaṭṭu Vaṅgīpuram Tiruveṅkaṭācārya Svāmī in the year Plava, in the month of Kṛttikā under star Pūrāḍa. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Vidvān Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁhācārya Svāmī. He graduated from Tiruvaiyāru College taking his degree in Tarka and was awarded the Tarka Siromaṇi title. He was also the Principal of Madhurāntakam College. He was a *pañcakāla parāyaṇa* who considered his own house to be a temple. He took to asceticism in Vikṛti year in the month of Thai (9.2.1951). He travelled from Rāmeśvaram in the south to Himālayas in the north and performed one of his *cāturmāṣyavratas* at Ṛṣīkeśa. He built Vedapāṭhaśālās at Madhurāntakam and Pādūr and renovated the Rājagopuram at Pullambūtanguḍi and Tiruvallūr. He renovated the

Ahobila Maṭhas at Cuddappa, Vānamāmalai and Tirukkottiyūr. Many golden utensils were ordered to be made for the worship of Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha. A golden palanquin was also made for the Lord.

The Jīyar contributed many articles to journals like *Vedāntadīpikā* and *Śrī Nṛsiṁhapriyā* and also published some works of Attippaṭṭu Jīyar. After finishing his *cāturmāsyavrata* at Ṛṣīkeśa, the Jīyar came to Delhi, where he stayed for sometime doing *pañcasaṁskāra* and *prapatti* to those who resorted to his holy feet.

While returning South from Delhi, the Jīyar fell ill and attained *paramapada* at Naimiśāraṇya in the year Hemalamba, in the month of Kṛttikā on Śuklapakṣa tṛtīya tithi (24.11.1957). His Bṛndāvanam is at Naimiśāraṇya. He was the only Jīyar to have travelled so far across the length and breadth of India. He ruled the pontificate for five years and ten months.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीमत् श्रीरङ्गपृथ्वीश्वरशठरिपुणा संयमीन्द्रेण दृष्टं
न्यस्तात्मानं नृसिंहे नरहरिशठजिद्योगिनेतुः प्रसादात्।
प्राप्त-श्रीरङ्गकारिप्रभवयतिपतेः प्राप्तलक्ष्मीनृसिंहा-
स्थानं सेवे यतीन्द्रं सकलगुणनिधिं वीररघ्वीट्शठारिम्॥

44. *Śrī Vedānta Deśika Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Jīyar was born in Mukkūr on the banks of the river Ceiyyār to Vidvān Raṅgācārya Svāmī and Raṅganāyakī, in the year Manmatha in the

month of Āvaṇi under star Hastā (August 1895). His *pūrvāśrama* name was Mukkūr Rajagopālācārya Svāmī. He underwent his studies in the Vedapāṭhaśālā at Śrīmuṣṇam. He studied Śrīvaiṣṇava theology under renowned scholars like Taiyyār Māḍabhūśi Śrīnivāsācārya, Śrīmuṣṇam Kṛṣṇamācārya and Naḍādūr Kṛṣṇamācārya. He also gained a strong foundation in *Tarka śāstra* from Śrī Cakravartyācārya Svāmī of Tillayāmbur. Śrī Kāśi Kuppusvāmī Aiyaṅgār taught him the *Divyaprabandham*. Soon he established himself as an able teacher and began to give religious and philosophical discourses which were appreciated by connossieur and common man alike.

However he was called upon by the 40th Jīyar to accompany him in his wide travels at the instance of the 41th Jīyar . He took charge of the affairs of the Ahobila Maṭha at Kāñcī. He became the Āsthana Vidvān of the Ahobila Maṭha during the reign of the 42nd Jīyar.

During the brief period of the 43rd Jīyar's reign, Śrī Rājagopālācārya accompanied him in his sojourn to North India, and when the Jīyar left for his heavenly abode in the holy land of Naimiśāraṇya, he was called upon by his disciples to take over the leadership of the Maṭha. He was reluctant at first, but he found the call of duty to be irresistible and in the year Hemalamba in the month of Kṛthikā under Śravaṇa star, he donned the ochre robes and became the pontifical head on 27.11.1957 and settled down to purposive work. Before

returning to the South, he visited Puşkara where his lectures in Sanskrit and Hindi on *Śrīmad Rahasayatrayasāra* received wide acclaim. From Puşkara he went to Tirumala and then to Tirukkaṇḍalam where he composed *Śrī Lakşmī Nṛsiṁha Karāvalamba Stotra.* During the first 25 years of his pontificate he travelled far and wide reaching upto Rāmeśvaram in the South, widening the circle of Śrīvaiṣṇavas and strengthening the base of Śrīvaiṣṇavism by training scholars in Śrīvaiṣṇava lore and renovating Vaiṣṇava temples.

The annual Mālola Vidvatsadas became a memorable event in his time, which attracted scholars from far and wide. He was also instrumental in setting to metre the *Śrībhāşya* to make it easy for memorising. He was endowed with excellent communication skills and could put across his point to the layman and philosopher alike. He has authored the following works:-

Śrī Lakşmī Nṛsiṁha Karāvalamba Stotra, Śārīraka Adhikaraṇakramabodhinī, Brahmasūtrārthapadyamālikā, Viśiştādvaita-siddāntatattvasaṅgraha, Lakşmīnṛsiṁhaprapatti, Dayāsāgarśataka, Pañcāmṛta stotra, Maṅgalamālikā relating to all the Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha and *Sadupadeśa.*

His *Dayāsāgaraśatakam* is in praise of Lakşmī Nṛsiṁha and the Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha who have propagated the worship of the Lord Mālola Nṛsiṁha all over the country. Written in simple Sanskrit, the poem has universal appeal. The Lord is imagined as an ocean of compassion

(*dayāsāgara*), a fire that burns the evil past of the devotees, a repository of good qualities mentioned in the *Tāpanīya Upaniṣad* and an all-encompassing companion who takes within his fold the prayers of Brahmins, Ceñchus the hunters, farmers and soldiers with equal pleasure. From the 53rd verse onwards Mālola journeys down the hierarchy of the Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha. The 98th verse is autobiographical.

In keeping with the vision of the founder of Ahobila Maṭha, the Jīyar was a great builder. He established a Bṛndāvana at Naimiśāraṇya for the 43rd Jīyar, built a temple at Mukkūr, Nammāḻvār's *sannidhi* at Kāñcī, established a Maṭha at Puḻlambūtaṅguḍi, built a *sannidhi* for Tāyār at Injimedu, a Rājagopuram at Ahobilam, a *maṇṭapa* for Citra-utsava at Tiruvaḻlūr, a temple to Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha, Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa and Lord Hayagrīva and a *Kalyaṇamaṇṭapa* at Bombay, the Hṛttāpanāśinī tank at Tiruvaḻlūr, and established Ahobila Maṭhas at Tiruvahīndrapuram, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Vānamāmalai, and a large builiding for the Sanskrit College at Madhurāntakam. When one lists all these intellectural and administrative achievements in a saṁnyāsin's life, a good deal of which has to be spent in the ritural worship of the presiding deity Śrī Malola Nṛsiṁha, one will be struck with a sense of wonder.

All this work pales into insigificance beside the Jīyar's launching the construction of the Śrīraṅgam Rājagopuram when he entered his 84th year, in

1979. When he intimated this idea (which was conveyed to him through a dream by Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha) to his disciples, they were wonderstruck by the magnitude of the task as also the Jīyar's advanced age. But backed by immense reserves of will power, and armed with his engineering intuition and guided by child-like faith he went ahead with his task ordained by the Lord. Making arrangements for financial expenses which crossed the one crore mark, he personally supervised the construction work day in and day out. The residents of Śrīraṅgam will bear ample testimony to his untiring efforts which reached completion in 1985. With 13 tiers built at a cost of Rs.15 million, the Rājagopuram is the tallest tower in Asia, 165 feet in length and 150 feet in breadth and rising up to 226 feet in height.

An intellectual, a spiritual guide, a generous benefactor, a great builder, the Jīyar was also a great lover of art. Despite his tiring schedule, the Jīyar always had time to encourage artists who spread the message of *bhakti* (devotion). When he found that his health was failing, he called upon the āsthāna Vidvān Villivalam Kṛṣṇamācārya to take over the Maṭha affairs after granting him the ochre robes in the year Prajāpati, in the month of Aippasi (21.10.91). This Jīyar performed over 35 *cāturmāsyavratas* and attained heavenly abode in the year Aṅgirasa in the month of Āḍi (16.8.92). His Bṛndāvanam is at Śrīraṅgam.

His Taniyan reads as under:

श्रीरङ्गनाथशठकोपयतीन्द्रदृष्टं लक्ष्मीनृसिंहशठजित्करुणैकपात्रम्।
श्रीरङ्गवीररघुराट्ठ्ठकोपहृद्यम् वेदान्तदेशिकयतीन्द्रमहं प्रपद्ये॥

45. *Śrī Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika*

This Svāmī was born in Villivalam in North Arcot district in Akṣaya year in the month of Kārtikai under star Uttaraṭṭādi (December 12,1926) to Paḷaveri Cakravarti Nṛsiṁhācārya Svāmī and Raṅganāyakī. His *pūrvāśrama* name was Kṛṣṇamācārya Svāmī. He studied at the feet of his father, but after his father's demise at a very early age, he turned to his elder brother Nārāyaṇācārya Svāmī for guidance. He had his *upākarma* done by his elder brother at the appropriate time. The requisite basic education necessary for under - standing the Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophy was imparted by the Svāmī's elder brother who was conferred the title of *Vedāntavāvad ūka* for his proficiency in philosophy.

Śrī Kṛṣṇamācārya was a student of the Madras University passing the Nyāya Śiromaṇi Certificate in 1949 with honours, from the Madurāntakam college. He received the first prize for general proficiency. Later, he had the good fortune of learning the *nyāya* and *mīmāṁsa śāstras* at the feet of the 42nd and 43rd Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha. He had served as Tamil Pandit in the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Chingleput for four years from 1956 and later, as

Nyāya Professor in the Śrī Ahobila Maṭha Sanskrit College, Madurāntakam till 1965. He was appointed as the *Āsthana Vidvān* of the Maṭha by the 44th Jīyar in 1966 and he had been the joint-editor of the journal "*Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*" (Tamil) since 1982.

Settling down at Madras Śrī Kṛṣṇamācārya had been regularly giving discourses in *Śrībhāṣya*, *Śrīmad Rahasyatrayasāra*, *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *Tiruppāvai* and *Bhagavad Gītā* at various places in the country for the past 30 years. His discourses delivered in the conventional style on the *granthacatuṣtaya* were a source of perennial interest to his friends and disciples. He was a Board Member of the Ahobila Maṭha Sanskrit Vidyā Abhivardhinī Sabhā which manages the Maṭha's Oriental High Schools at Madurāntakam and West Mambalam, as also the Sanskrit College at Madurāntakam and in this capacity his contribution is significant. His scholarly commentaries on the *Upaniṣads* and *Viṣṇu Pūrāṇa* which are published serially in the "*Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*" have now been compiled and published in book form by Śrī Viśiṣṭādvaita Research Centre, Madras.

The 44th Jīyar suddenly took ill in October 1991, and immediately sent for Śrī Kṛṣṇamācārya to take up the reins of the Maṭha. His formal induction into *saṁnyāsāśrama* amidst traditional rituals took place on October 21st 1991. It will be significant to note that Śrī Kṛṣṇamācārya had his *pañcasaṁskāra* from the 42nd Jīyar, *bharanyāsa* under 43rd Jīyar and

preṣamantropadeśa from the 44th Jīyar at Śrī Ahobilam. He recalls to this day, with great veneration, his close association with these Ācāryas and mentions nostalgically many interesting ancedotes during the short period when he was called upon to attend to the personal needs of the 42nd Jīyar for sometime.[1]

Once the formal *pattabhiṣeka* cermony (24.8.1992) was over, His Holiness took the āśrama name of "Śrī Vaṅ Śaṭhakopa Śrī Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika"[2] and donned the *haṁsamudrā* (signet ring) to execute the administrative duties which invariably form part of the pontifical head's officaldom. He took to his task with seriousness, and the five years of his pontifical rule are enough testimony to his capacity as a good administrator. He was a scholar (*vidvān*) and a capable administrator (*samartha*).[3] The *Śrīkāryam* of Ahobila Maṭha has listed four outstanding qualities of the present Jīyar. They are: *dātṛtva*, *priyavaktṛtva*, *dhīratva* and *ucitajñatā*,[4] which qualities cannot be acquired, but are only natural to him. The Jīyar has stated in no uncertain terms after his assumption of the pontifical office that his duty was only to live up to the training, guidance and ideals of his *pūrvācāryas* and carry on the torch of their glorious tradition for the benefit

1 *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*, part 2, Nov. 1994, p. 50. See also *Saptati Malar*, p. vii, 21st Nov. 1996.
2 In respectful memory of his brother Śrī Nārāyaṇācārya.
3 *Saptati Malar*, p. 59.
4 Ibid. p. 58.

of *śiṣyas* and aspirants. Adhering to the guidelines laid by Svāmī Deśika, His Holiness enlightens the masses by his discourses and interesting educative writings, and performs his daily and enjoined duties through his dedicated *ārādhanā* to Śrī Mālola Nṛsiṁha - "*Adhyātmagranthanirmāṇam, anekeṣām ca bodhanam, arcāvatāra sevā ca.*"

The Jīyar took upon himself the task of making the forest shrines of Ahobilam more accessible to the devotees, by taking Śrī Mālola Nṛsiṁha (*utsava* deity) to Ahobilam for eight times and providing the pleasure of having the *darśan* of the *mūla* and *utsava* idols in unison for five times starting from 26.11.1992, on 3.3.1993, 3.10.1993, 20.3.1994 and 8.10.1995. He was instrumental in constructing 32 steps leading to the Bhairava tank at Ahobilam at a cost of Rs.15,000. In March 1993, His Holiness bedecked Lord *Prahlādavarada* at Ahobilam with golden *śaṅkha, cakra* and *abhayahasta*, a golden crown and foot-rest and a golden *yajñopavīta* at a cost of Rs.17 lakhs. In October 1994, he renovated the holy tank in front of the Ahobilam temple. He performed the *abhigamana* and *ijyārādhana* for Śrī Mālola Nṛsiṁha in the *maṇṭhapa* adjoining the tank on 31.10.1996. A new chariot ws ordered to be made for Lord Prahlādavarada at a cost of Rs.24 lakhs and this was presented on 5.3.1996 and on this occasion a new pathway leading to Śrī Chatravaṭa Nṛsiṁha *sannidhi* was laid.

The Jīyar's contributions to the renovation of other *divyadeśa* temples are innumerable and his visit to Badrikāśrama is a memorable one, as those who travelled in his entourage will vouchsafe. Suffice it to say, he has travelled across the length and breadth of India[1] in his onerous task of carrying out the divine command of Lord Nṛsiṁha. His literary contribution is also very significant. Noteworthy among his works is the *Sudhīpriyā*, a *nithyagrantha* commentary on the *Śrīvaiṣṇavasadācāranirṇaya* of Śrī Raṅganātha Yatīndra, the 26th pontiff. It took nearly seven valuable years to compile this work and its speaks volumes for the Jīyar's *Ācārya bhakthi* because he had undertaken this work at the instance of the 42nd Jīyar. He has performed four *cāturmāsya vratas*. The establishment of several Trusts to take care of the various activities of the Maṭha is a significant event during the Jīyar's pontifical rule. They are: the Save Trust, Smart Trust, Samrāt Trust, Viśiṣṭādvaita Research Centre and Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā Trust.[2] In the midst of his very busy schedule the Jīyar is presently writing a commentary on *Śrimad Rahasyatrayasāra* which is being published serially in the *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā*.

Carrying the mantle of his forbears in propagating the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy, His Holiness, the 45th Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha

1 For a detailed account of H.H. the Jīyar's sojourns, see *Saptati Malar*, pp. 32-38.

2 For details see *Saptati Malar*, pp. 107 - 108.

demonstrates how spirituality and monasticism can be effectively practised in a secular society.

His Taniyan reads as under:-

श्रीमद्रङ्गशठारिसंयमिवरात्लब्धागमान्तद्वयं
श्रीमद्वीररघूद्वहाख्यशठजित्पादारविन्दाश्रयम्।
श्रीमद्वेदवतंसदेशिकयतेः कारुण्यवीक्षास्पदं
सेवे रङ्गधुरीणशासनवशं नारायणं योगिनम्॥

The above is a brief description of the lives of the saints of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha. The onerous task started by Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa is continuing into the future also.

A STUDY OF SELECT WORKS OF THE JĪYARS OF ŚRĪ AHOBILA MAṬHA

An attempt is made in this chapter to present a brief study of some works of the Pontiffs of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha. The works are selected on the basis of their literary and philosophical importance. Smaller *stotras* like *daśakas*, *aṣṭottaraśatas* and *maṅgalāśāsanas* are not taken into consideration. Some of the works are highly scholarly disputations, some are elucidatory of important concepts like *puruṣakāra* and *rahasyas*, while some others are commentarial, expounding basic texts like the *Śrībhāṣya* and *Gītārthasaṅgraha*. As many as 25 works of the Pontiffs have been studied in this chapter. Some of the works are in the form of palm-leaf / paper manuscripts while a majority of them is available in print. The fact that the Pontiffs could find time to compose excellent treatises inspite of their busy schedule of ritual worship of the presiding deity Śrī Mālola Nṛsiṁha, temple renovations, periodical tours and so on, makes the study all the more inspiring and interesting.

Yajussandhyāvandanabhāṣya[1]

The author, Śrī Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Śrī Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra Mahādeśika, second Jīyar begins his Bhāṣya by paying his obeisance to Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha the presiding deity at Ahobilam and then to his guru and predecessor, Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Svāmī by whose grace, the import of *Vedas* was made as clear as the fruit in one's palm. This echoes the idea expressed in the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*[2] which stresses the importance of *Bhagavad bhakti* and *Ācārya bhakti* in elucidating the inner meaning of the *mantras*.

The author declares at the outset that thousands of commentaries are available for the *Sandhyāvandana mantras* and states that the present work comments on these *mantras* from the Vedāntic point of view.[3]

The author points out that the word *Devatā*, whenever it occurs in the *mantra* must be taken to refer to Lord Nārāyaṇa only, since the *Pāñcarātra* texts declare thus - "*Paramātmā devatā*", and the *paramātmā* is none other

1 With *Maṇipravāla Vyākhyā* by Śrīvaṇśaṭhakopa Śrī Raṅgaśaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśika, 42nd Jīyar, pub. by R. Krishnamachariar at Gopalakrishna Press, Madras on 2.4.1950.

2 यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः॥ (VI. 23)

3 Vide. p. 2:
आपोहिष्ठादिमन्त्राणां व्याख्याः सन्ति सहस्रशः।
त्रय्यन्तार्थानुसारेण व्याख्येयं क्रियते मया॥

than Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself. Since the *upaniṣadic* passages have also been interpreted in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition as implying the supremacy and the causal character of Lord Nārāyaṇa, the present body of literature namely the *Sandhyāvandana mantra* should also be interpreted in the same light.

The author profusely quotes from the *Brahma Sūtras*, *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas* and *Bhagavad Gītā* to elucidate his interpretations. For example, the word *āpas* found in the portion of the *mantra* - *āpo janayathā ca naḥ* (p. 6) is interpreted by our author to mean Lord Viṣṇu who has the waters as His Body. The *nāmarūpavyākaraṇa Śruti* in *Chāndogya* (section vi) has been interpreted by Śrī Rāmānuja[1] to mean that all words referring to living and non-living entities must imply only the Supreme Being, since all these form the body of the Lord, and since the Lord exists in all these entities as the inner soul (*antaryāmin*). Even holy rivers like the Ganges are adorable because of their association with the Lord and the very characteristic of sanctity has been imparted to them by the Lord Himself.[2]

Likewise the word "*sūrya*" in the *mantra* starting, *sūryaśca mā manyuśca* ... is interpretated by Śrī Nārāyaṇa Yatīndra to mean Lord Nārāyaṇa

1 *Śrībhāṣya* - Jijñāsādhikaraṇa.

2 p. 8 - सर्वफलप्रदं भगवन्तं विना केवलस्य जलस्य ... इत्यत्रोक्तम्।

only.[1] This is in accordance with the *Śrībhāṣya* on the *Brahma Sūtra* (I, i, 21): *antastaddharmopadeśāt.*

On the same lines, the author proceeds to explain the term *Varuṇa* to mean Lord Nārāyaṇa (p-42). Finally the *mantra* hails *Varuṇa* and prays that all sins be destroyed:

सर्वा ता विष्य शिथिरेव देव! अथाते स्याम वरुण प्रियासः।

and this destroyer of sin is none other than Śrīman Nārāyaṇa.

This has been rendered into Maṇipravāla by the 42nd Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha. In the introduction, he summarises the necessity of performing *sandhyāvandana* by all people belonging to the three *Varṇas* namely Brāhmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, and states that one who does not perform this *nityakarma* is not eligible to perform any *karma* at all. (*anarhaḥ sarvakarmasu*). He also states that he has written in Maṇipravāla style to enable laymen to understand the real import of the *mantras* which in turn will enable them to perform their daily duties. This *vyākhyā* makes easy reading and is quite useful for laymen of Sanskrit language.

1 सुष्ठु ईरयति प्रेरयतीति सूर्यः - परमात्मा

Nyāsa-vimśati Vyākhyā [1]

The doctrine of *prapatti* as expounded in the Śrīvaiṣṇava system of philosophy, with its catholicity of approach is recommended to all irrespective of distinctions of caste; and this has taken the doctrine to the lowest of the low, to layman and woman alike. Vedānta Deśika's *Nyāsa-vimśati* is a metrical composition in 22 verses dealing with this doctrine for which Deśika himself has written a commentary. However the author of this explanatory treatise, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni (2nd Jīyar) feels that Deśika's commentary is not simple enough and hence he has penned this work.

Beginning with the term *Sat-sampradāya*[2] the author offers a couple of interpretations. It means the tradition as established by Yāmuna and other *ācāryas*; the secret teachings of the tradition imparted by *guru* to *śisya* (*rahaṣyajāta*), it or may refer to noble descent (*satkulaprasūti*). The term *īpset* in the desiderative form suggests that the whole process is something obligatory (*niyogavidhi*).[3] The characteristics of the *guru* and qualifications of the disciple are enumerated. The teacher imparts learning to the disciple which is in fact *vidyā-janma* and hence the disciple is born again.

1 By Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni (2nd Jīyar). See *Nyāsa Vimśati* - A critical study - Dissertation submitted to Universty of Madras, for M. Phil degree by Mrs. G.Sakuntala (1986).

2 *Nyāsa-vimśati*, A critical study. p. 77.

3 Ibid. p. 78.

The term *mām* and *ekam* in the *Carama śloka* are important, according to the author. Explaining v.16 of the *Nyāsa Vimśati*, the author feels that the word *ekam* in particular precludes *prapatti* from the scope of *upāya*; and exhibits the oneness (*aikya*) of *upāya* and *upeya*; it may be interpreted as referring to the Lord as the one who can confer all human ends, that He does not require anything else but *nyāsa* as a pretext (*vyājamātram*) to save the devotees; or it may be taken to mean the Lord as the most important means of *mokṣa*. Nārāyaṇa Muni makes an interesting observation as to whether *ekam* includes Śrī - His Consort or not. The answer is that Lord Viṣṇu in eternal association with Śrī forms a single unitary principle i.e. the supreme God-head. This has been indicated by Vedāntadeśika by the use of the term Śrīsakha.[1] Explaining the *sādhyopāya*, the author states that *prapatti* is *śaraṇāgati* and quotes from the *Śrībhaṣya*[2] where Rāmānuja uses the term *śaraṇāgati*.

Explaining v.19, the author states that one should give up *vidhi* and *niṣedha* types of acts and should perform only such acts by which one does not incur *anartha*. Now and then one has to do *prāyaścitta*. This itself is explained as *prapatti* by Śrī Deśika. The ultimate advice to *prapannas* is that *bhakti* etc., should be asked for only from the Lord or His associates

1 *Nyāsa-vimśati*, A critical study, p. 114.

2 *Śrībhāṣya*, II, p. 101. - *Tasya vaśīkaraṇam taccaraṇāravinda śaraṇāgatireva*

(*bhaktyādikam bhagavataḥ tadīyebhyo yācet*).[1] Acts for peace, health and strength should be done invoking Lord Viṣṇu only, to the exclusion of other gods like Brahmā, Indra (*śāntipauṣṭikādikam ca bhagavantamuddhiśyaiva kuryāt, na brahmarudrāgnyādikam*)

The *ājña* (compulsory) and *anujñā* (permitted) duties are discussed in the commentary of v. 20. The term *svābhīṣṭaphala* is explained by the author as accruing immediately after *prapatti* or at the fall of the present body or at any time a *prapanna* chooses[2] (*prapattyuttarakāle dehāvasāne vā yadā prāptīcchā tasmin kāle*).

Thus the commentary of Nārāyaṇa Muni explains all the issues connected with *prapatti* as an independent means of *mokṣa*. The commentator has displayed his profound scholarship through various quotations from *Lakṣmī Tantra, Śrībhāṣya, Viṣṇupurāṇa, Viṣṇudharma* and so on. By his lucid exposition he has made it a veritable treat for those interested in this field.

1 *Nyāsa-vimśati*, A critical study.p. 120.
2 Ibid. p. 126.

Rahasyatrajīvātu[1]

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni pays his obeisance to the Lord and Śrī and says that the meanings he had learnt from his ācāryas have been condensed into this work for the easy comprehension of his disciples. From the colophon of the Manuscript we come to know that this work was also called *Rahasyatrayadīpa*. As the name suggests, this work is a veritable life-saving drug for suffering humanity. It is the beacon light that leads them to final beatitude i.e. *sāyujya*.

The author then goes on to speak of the three secrets viz., *Aṣṭākṣara*, *Dvaya* and *Carama śloka*. He goes into the genesis of the first *mantra*. Its greatness lies in the fact that it was imparted directly by Lord Nārāyaṇa to Nara who was infact, His own aspect, at *Badrikāśrama*. The *Aṣṭākṣara* is called the *vyāpaka mantra*, as it is not only found in the *Viṣṇu Gāyatrī* starting with "*Nārāyaṇāya vidmahe*" but also in all the *Vedas*. The author corroborates this with the help of quotations from *Pañcarātra* texts. *Dvaya mantra* which follows, is called *Mantra Ratna*, the very gem among *mantras*. Both these can be called *Rahasyas* since they should not be heard by a third person (*aṣaṭkarṇatayā*). Regarding the *Carama śloka* (Gītā xviii. 66) an

1 By Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni, 2nd Jīyar. Two manuscripts are available (a) GOML - Madras No: 5339, Palmleaf, Telugu characters. (b) Adyar D.X. 421, Palm leaf, Grantha characters. The above study is based on the latter manuscript.

objection can be raised regarding its secret character (*rahasyatva*) since it can be learnt by all the four castes. The author replies that *Carama śloka* is still a *rahasya* is as much as it is in the form of an injunction (*vidhi*) ordained upon a *prapanna*; and it elucidates the import of the first two *mantras*. This point has been discussed at length.

Among these *mantras*, there is a sort of hierarchy. The meaning of the first *mantra* is explained by the second and the full implication of the second *mantra* is conveyed by the third, so that all these three form a composite whole known collectively as *Rahasyatraya*.

The author points out that the *Aṣṭākṣara* when repeated along with the *praṇava*, appropriate *svara* and various auxillaries, is called *vaidika* and without these special accessories it is *tāntrika* which is open to all castes. Several passages are quoted from *Purāṇas* and *Smṛtis* in support of this. The author also takes occassion to explain certain Vedic *mantras* where the word *Maheśvara* is used. The term *Maheśvara* according to the author (folio-4) refers only to the Supreme Brahman, Lord Nārāyaṇa. He goes on to give the grammatical interpretation regarding the syllable '*om*' where *a* stands for Viṣṇu in the Dative sense. The point that Viṣṇu alone is the protector has been proved at length. That the jīva is connoted by the syllable *ma*, that he exists only for the sake of the Lord (*Tādarthya*), that for this reason, *jīva* is

known as *śeṣa* has been explained at length by the author in a masterly way. The Lord is the *Śeṣin* in eternal association with Śrī. This point has been corroborated by a number of quotation from *Pāñcarātra* texts and Yāmuna's *Catuśślokī*.

The author goes on to explain *śeṣatva* and *dāsatva* as mutually complementary in character (*śeṣatva jñānarhatvam hi dāsatvam*) (Folio 6a). He explains the definitions of the term *śarīra* as given by Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya*.

The middle syllable in *om* is *u* and is explained as conveying emphasis (*avadhāraṇa*), so that all the three put together explain the irrevokable relationship that all *jīvas* are subservient to the Lord in association with Śrī. He explains the character of *jīva* as conveyed by *ma* from various viewpoints based on different verbal roots- "*mana jñāne, man avabodhane, māṅ māne, maśi parimāṇe*", so that a full picture of the *jīva* would emerge as knower, as atomic in character and as distinct from the body, senses and so on.

The *śeṣatvajñāna* is more important than the knowledge that *ātmā* and *śarīra* are different. He is *jīva* only because he is essentially a *śeṣa* to the Lord. He quotes from the *Viṣṇu purāṇa* to prove this point. The Lord is the inner controller (*yamasyāpi yamaḥ*) and he enters the *jīvātmā* (*anupraveśa*) and rules from within (*sarvaniyantā, antaḥpraviṣṭaśśāstā janānām*) and hence

, he is *sarvātmā*. The relevant verse from the *Prapanna Pārijāta* (Folio 9) is quoted to elucidate this point. This knowledge of one's *śeṣatva* itself is a *yāga*. He quotes from Vedāntadeśika to explain that *pratyagātmā* is the oblation, *ātmasamarpaṇa* is the sacrifice and the *praṇava* is the *karaṇamantra*, and the fruit is *mokṣa* (Folio 9a).

The author goes on to explain the meaning of the *praṇavavākya*. It makes one bow down in all humility (*prakarṣena nāmayati*). He quotes *Atharvaśiras* as authority and states that the *jīva* is possessor of vital breath (*prāṇān prāṇinaḥ*) and the Lord is the inner controller (*śeṣatvena niyacchati*). The word *a* is *Viṣṇuvācaka* because it is *cit svarūpa*; and *ukāra* is Śrī and *makāra* is the *jīva* who is the servant of both Lord and Śrī. He thus establishes the *śeṣatva* and *pāratantrya* of the *jīva* in the *praṇava mantra*.

Next, the author goes on to elucidate the *namaḥ śabda*. Only the Lord is *śeṣabhūta* and the *jīvas* add excellence to the Lord through subordination to Him. (*atiśayādhāyako hi śeṣa iti vyapadiśyate*) (Folio 10). He says that by the term *namaḥ*, *ahāṅkāra* and *mamakāra* are rooted out totally. He defines *ahaṅkāra* as (*ahameva mama nirvāhakaḥ*) pride in feeling that "I can take care of myself". *Mamakāra* is defined as (*idam mameti*) "feeling of being the possessor of objects that do not really belong to one" (Folio 10 a).

A valid point is then taken up for discussion - whether there is any *kartṛtva* for a *jīva* and whether *jīva* has any independence during *prathamapravṛtti*. According to Svāmī Deśika, the question of *prathamapravṛtti* does not arise because *jīvas* are beginningless and *karma* is also beginningless. The author states that to a person who is favourably disposed towards God, (*atimātra bhagavadānukūlya vyasthita*) (Folio 11a) a desire to seek salvation is generated by the Lord Himself (*rucim janayati*); and in the case of the person who is not favourably disposed towards Him, God allows him to proceed in those lines that do not lead him to God. He quotes from the *Bhagavad Gītā* to substantiate his point. He acknowledges that Rāmānuja has explained this point in the *Śrībhāṣya* (*parāyattādhikaraṇam*).

Hence by the *praṇava* both *śeṣatva* and *pāratantrya* are fully established. He then goes on to explain the difference between the two: *yatheṣṭa viniyogārhatvam* is *śeṣatvam* i.e., fitness to be utilised as one desires and *yatheṣṭa viniyujyamānatvam* is *pāratantryam* i.e. capacity to be utilised as one desires.

The *jīva* has the capacity to do things by himself to a certain extent, like worshipping the Lord etc., *jīvāsya kartṛtvam vyāpārāśrayamātram*. Sometimes *acetana* can be the cause of activity, like mud being used for producing pots. But this is meant as an *upacāra* only. So, the Lord accords His permission by inducing action and remains a silent witness (*sākṣī*) because

the *jīva* is only experiencing the fruits of his own *karma*. The Lord becomes the *sahakārikāraṇa* (co-operative cause) because He is the indweller in all and He is the granter of fruits as explained in *Śrībhāṣya* (*phalmata upapatteḥ*) (Folio 12). He stresses the importance of devotion to God and quotes *Śruti* texts in his favour and says that all acts are in vain without devotion to the Lord. He speaks very highly of *Viṣṇubhaktas*. He quotes *Viṣṇupurāṇa* to substantiate the innate greatness of *Bhāgavatas*.

He raises a question in (Folio 14 a) as to whether servitude to *Bhāgavatas* does not mean disrespect (*droha*) to the Lord. He denies this and states that it is only through God's *saṅkalpa* that one becomes a *dāsa* of a *dāsa*. In fact *Bhāgavata śeṣatva* is more pleassing than *Bhagavat śeṣatva* and this is obtained only through God's Grace. Only *aniṣṭa* (dislike) has to avoided. So, there is mutual interdependence between devotees. There is no mutual contradiction if one is a master and the other is a servant and yet both are servants of God. The author then speaks of how the Ācārya imparts *sadupadeśa* according to *śiṣya's* wish and eligibility (*yathāhṛdayam yathārham ca*) (Folio 15 a). He quotes the first verse of the *Rahaṣyatraya-sāra-śiṣyakṛtyādhikaraṇa* to substantiate his point. The *anyonyapārārthyam* is the *śeṣaśeṣibhāva* between an *ācārya* and his disciple; but as far as the Lord is concerned, both are equal (*sāmya*) in their being the servants of the Lord.

Here, *Bhāgavata* means a *paramaikāntin.* He quotes the relevant *Viṣṇupurāṇa* verse:

एकान्तिनः सदा ब्रह्मध्यायिनो योगिनो हि ये।
तेषां तत्परमं स्थानं यद्वै पश्यन्ति सूरयः॥

These *Bhāgavatas* are devoted to Viṣṇu to the exclusion of other gods. He goes on to quote extensively from the *Vāmanapurāṇa* to elucidate the fact that *Viṣṇubhaktas* are superior to other devotees because of Lord Viṣṇu's Supremacy and this *Bhāgavata* enjoys being the servant of the Lord. The *Bhaviṣyat Purāṇa* is quoted, where Rudra himself speaks of the impermanent fruits for the followers of *Pāśupataśāstra* and he goes on to condemn non-Vedic religions and describes the fate of those who follow these religions. Hence, the author concludes that Lord Viṣṇu alone is the one to be resorted to by performing *śaraṇāgati.*

Next, the term *namaḥ* of the *Aṣṭākṣara* is taken up for discussion. *Namaḥ* according to the author is *śaraṇāgati vācaka śabda* and he corroborate this from the *Ahirbudhnya samhitā* (52-31 & 32)

पन्था नकार उद्दिष्टो मः प्रधान उदीर्यते।
विसर्गः परमेशस्तु तत्रार्थोऽयं निरुच्यते॥
...
तत्प्राप्तये प्रधानोऽयं पन्था नमन - नामवान्॥

Here *na* denotes *upāya* the path, *ma* denotes its importance and the *visarga* denotes the Lord and hence the term *namaḥ* means only *śaraṇāgati.*

Three types of interpretation are possible here. In the subtle (*sūkṣma*) sense, this denotes *bhagavatpāratantrya*; in the gross (*sthūla*) sense, it means *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti*; and in the ultimate (*para*) sense, it refers to the *siddhopāya* i.e. *puruṣottama*.

The third word of the *Aṣṭākṣara*, namely *Nārāyaṇa*, is then taken up for study. The *akāra* and *makāra* in the *Praṇava* are explained by this term Nārāyaṇa i.e. the all -controlling power of the Lord denoted by *akāra* and the eternality of the *jīvas* by the *makāra*. The *caturthī vibhakti* denotes the fruit of *śaraṇāgati*. The two different compounds, *Tatpuruṣa* and *Bahuvrīhi* are exhaustively detailed out. He speaks of the distinctions between *cit*, *acit* and *Īśvara*; and the distinction among *jīvas* themselves. *Jīva* is called *nara* because he does not undergo modification like *acit*. Lord is the *ayana* or abode and He is the *upāya* and leads them to Himself. The author declares that *ayanaśabdasya ādhārārthatve sakalacetana - acetana ādhāratvam bhagvataḥ siddhyati* (Folio 18 a). He defends the viewpoint that there is no mutual contradiction involved in the Lord being both *upāya* and *upeya*. He states that the natural compassion (*svābhāvika dayā*) and Grace (*prasāda*) of the Lord are the two qualities that make Him the *upāya*; and because the Lord is the cause of the Universe, He is the *upeya* (Folio 18 a) as well (*sarvakāraṇatva viśiṣṭatayā sarvadā anubhāvyatva viśeṣeṇa prāpyatvam*). The author

draws a distinction between *bhakti* and *prapatti* and states that *prapatti* will result ultimately in *bhakti* to the Lord.

He goes on to refute the view of *Mīmāṁsakas* that *Vāyu* and other gods grant fruits and declares that it is the Lord as *antaryāmin* in all these gods who ultimately bestows the fruits by corroborating from the *Śrībhāṣya*. So, all *Vedāntavākyas* declare the Lord to be the possessor of all good qualities by His own nature, prescribe the code of propitiating Him through *yāga, dāna, homa, stuti, namaskāra* and so on, and promise the fruit of this worship namely *bhoga* and *mokṣa*. For the Lord this *śaraṇāgati* is a mere pretext (*vyājamātra*) for final liberation. He is indeed the *kāraṇa* for all *cetanas*.

Quoting profusely from Śruti texts, the author declares that there was only Nārāyaṇa in the beginning and that Śiva and Brahmā are lesser in status to Nārāyaṇa. The Lord's *janma* and *karma* are both divine and He incarnates only for the protection of the virtuous. In the beginning of every *yuga*, Brahmā, Indra and other gods propitiate Viṣṇu in order to obtain and retain their positions. Thus the *jagatkāraṇatva*, the *mokṣa pradānatva* and the *jagad ādhāratva* of the Lord are established in no uncertain terms.

By the *Bahuvrīhi* interpretation of the term *nārāyaṇa* the *antaryāmitva* and by the *Tatpuruṣa* interpretation the *bahirvyāptitva* of the Lord are then

proved. The innumerable auspicious perfections of the Lord are extolled citing *Parāśara Bhaṭṭa* and *Rāmānuja*. The author quotes from *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Viṣṇusūkta* in *Ṛg Veda* and drives home the point that even in His incaranations, the Lord's body is *aprākṛta* and is not the result of any *karma* at all (*na karma-nimittajātam*).

The author then speaks of the Lord's *nityayogatva* with Śrī and His permanent abode *Vaikuṇṭha*:

वैकुण्ठे तु परे लोके श्रिया सार्धं जगत्पतिः।
आस्ते विष्णुरचिन्त्यात्मा भक्तैर्भागवतैः सह॥

He cites the Vaikhānasa Āgama to state the pluarity of *viṣṇulokas-āmoda, pramoda sammoda* and *vaikuṇṭha*. The *Mokṣadharma* describes the location of *vaikuṇṭha* above all the other worlds. The Lord is untouched by the *rajas* and *tamo guṇa* of *prakṛti* and yet His external pervasion is such that there is no place untouched by Him (*aspaṣṭapradeśavaidhurya*). He is *avāptasamastakāmaḥ* and is always happy; the sportive creation of the world is by His own *saṅkalpa* and He is the granter of *mokṣa*.

The author then expatiates on the *caturthi vibhakti* of the term *Nārāyaṇāya* and says that it refers to the fruit of *kaiṅkarya*. Each *jīva* has a different *puruṣārtha* according to his body; for the cattle it is grass, for man it is rice, for gods it is *amṛta* and so on. This gradation in life is seen in hell also. The author declares that the fruit of the *karaṇakaḷebarayoga* is only

Bhagavatsevā. He discusses about the difference between *kaiṅkarya* and *anubhava* in the state of liberation. In this process, the author speaks of *viṣṇuloka* and draw a distinction between *viṣṇuloka* and *paramapada* and says that the former is located in *prakṛtimaṇḍala.* It seems to be a lower kind of heaven, because he mentions that people return to earth after sometime (*kālaviśeṣa*) but once a *jīva* reaches *paramapada* there is no coming back to earth certainly. This can be reached through *bhakti* and *prapatti* and in the *paramapada* there is *paripūrṇa bhagavadanubhavaprāpti.* The *muktas* are always possessed with *kainkarya śakti.* The author then states that *sāyujya* is the final beatitude - *sāyujyameva sākṣānmokṣaḥ.* Etymologically, *sāyujya* means *sayujoḥ bhāvaḥ* and hence there is extreme similarity in enjoyment (*bhogasāmyam*). There is *paramasāmyam* only and not *aikyam* and hence there is *bheda.*[1]

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni then goes on to explain *kaivalya* which is different from *mokṣa* because in the former there is no *bhagavadanubhava.* Only *bhagavatkaiṅkarya* is *mokṣa.* He quotes Yāmuna's *Gītārthasaṅgraha* to show that *kaivalya* is *mokṣa* and *kevalas* can reach God through *arcirādi mārga.*

1 Cf. *Śrībhāṣya,* "*bhogamātrasāmyaliṅgācca*"(IV. iv. 21).

Finally the author explains the suffix *āya* and states that it implies eternal servitude to the Lord. Hence in the *Aṣṭākṣara* '*om*' refers to *svarūpa*, '*namaḥ*' refers to *upāya* and Nārāyaṇa is the *puruṣārtha*.

In the second section the author takes up the *Dvayamantra* for discussion. He says that it is called *Dvaya* because it has two parts - *khaṇḍadvaya*. The author states that because it is a *mantra* that connotes *śaraṇāgati*, it has to be received from one's *ācārya* who acts as the mediator for the soul desirous of liberation. Hence it is all the more necessary to have an *ācārya* and follow the *satsampradāya* as laid down by the *ācāryas*. He goes on to explain the *ācāryalakṣaṇa* as detailed out in the first verse of Svāmī Deśika's *Nyāsaviṁśati*[1] word by word. It is interesting to note that this *vyākhyā* is similar to the *Nyāsavaiṁsati-vyākhyā* by the same author. All the points are incorporated here. He dwells at length on the miseries of worldly existence to highlight the necessity of liberation. For this, one should resort to a good *ācārya* with whose grace, one can perform *śaraṇāgati*.

After this lengthy prelude, the author goes on to explain the meaning of this *mantraratna*, the very germ among *mantras* - its essential nature (*svarūpa*) and its meaning (*arthasvarūpa*). He quotes the *Śvetasvara upaniṣad* - "*mumukṣur vai śaraṇamaham prapadye*" and from the *Padmapurāṇa* to

1 त्वत्संप्राप्तौ प्रभवति तथा देशिको मे दयालुः ॥

stress the greatness of this *mantra*. Here Śrī denotes Lakṣmī just as *akāra* denotes Lord Viṣṇu in a special way. *Śri-sevāyām* is the verbal root which denotes the subject and object etymologically i.e. She does service to the Lord and She is served by all the *cetanas* (Folio 40). The root *Śru-śravaṇe* indicates that *Śṛṇoti* and *Śrāvayati* are both possible in Her case. She listens to the prayers of the devotees and then pleads to the Lord on their behalf. *Śrū-himsāyām* and *Śrū-vistāra* are the roots which means that She removes the sins of the devotees and develops in them the desire for doing service to the Lord. Through this, Śrī's *puruṣakāratva* is also established. He quotes from the *Pāñcarātra Āgama* to substantiate this. But an objection may be raised here that the Lord is naturally the protector of all, and so He does not stand in need of a mediator to perform this duty-

स्वाभाविकसर्वरक्षकस्य परमकारुणिकस्य भगवतः कथमिव पुरुषकारसापेक्षा (Folio 40 a)

He replies that this necessity of a *purusakāra* is only through *Bhagavatsaṅkalpa*. The *Daṇḍadharatva* of the Lord, and the *Puruṣakāratva* of Śrī complement each says the author and quotes from Parāśara's *Śrīguṇaratnakośa* "*yuvatvādau*" (v.34) to substantiate his point. He answers another objection as to how the term *puruṣakāra* can be used in relation to a *cetana* like Śrī and concludes that Lakṣmī is the *śakti* of the Lord and is also His consort and hence She has equal powers in creation and other activities: *sṛṣṭyādi vyāpāreṣu samānalīlatayā* (Folio 41). She induces the Lord to act by

Her powers and hence is *sahakāriṇī*. He quotes from *Lakṣmī Tantra* to enumerate the three qualities that go to make up *śakti – icchā, saṁvit* and *ahantā.*

Compared to the other consorts of the Lord, Bhū and Nīḷa, Śrī occupies a pre-eminent place according to the author - *ataḥ bhagavataḥ upāyatve bhūminīlācāryebhyo api utkṛṣṭapuruṣakārabhūtā śrīreva bhavati* (Folio 41 a). Since Śrī is the *viśeṣaṇa* of the Lord, Her *patnīguṇa* acts as *viśeṣaṇa* to the Lord and there is no contradiction because there is unity in the goal and the way (*upāya upeya aikyam*). If we accept duality in *upāya* then we have to accept duality in *guṇa* and *vigraha* and there will be *vaiṣamya*. The term *māmekam* in the *carama śloka* refers to *Śrīmat śabda* only which in turn means "*lakṣmyā saha hṛṣīkeśaḥ*". The Lord is *cetanācetanātmaka kṛtsnaprapañcaviśiṣṭa* and is ever in association with Śrī. According to our Ācārya the *svara* clinches the issue.

The Lord needs Śrī as His *sahadharmacāriṇī* who is always favourable to the Lord's actions (*svakāryānukūla*) and this does not detract the Lord's all-powerful nature. Hence the Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa alone is the protector of all and He alone is to be resorted to by all. *Aniṣṭanivāraṇa* is the special quality of Śrī as *vātsalya* and *vāllabhya* are quite natural to Her. She tempers Lord's justice by her unique quality of *dayā*. When the ever-just Lord desires

to punish the erring souls (*kṣipāmyajasram* and *na kṣamāmi*). Śrī enters the Lord's heart and kindles the quality of *karuṇā* in Him and thus revives the *jīvas* and makes them survive: *kṛpāviṣayatvamujjīvanam ca* (Folio 43 a).

Hence the author states that it is absolutely essential that Śrī should be present when *śaraṇāgati* is performed to the Lord. (*Bhagavataḥ samāśrayaṇe śriyassannidhānam avaśyāpekṣitam iti siddham*). Certainly, Śrī neither deprives nor infringes upon the Lord's independence. *Śriyaḥpatitva* is the special quality of the Lord and hence the Lord does not have any *vastutva* without Her (*anayā vinā na vastu siddhiḥ*). The Lord's independence is not impaired. He quotes the relevant verse from *Śrīguṇaratnakośa*, "*svayā dīptyā ratnam bhavadapi mahārgham*". In reality independence implies only mutual dependence.

The author then goes on to explain the term *nara*. It means *nara sambandhi* and *nara rakṣaṇa upayogiguṇajātam* i.e. *samāśrita* and *samrakṣaṇaguṇas* such as *kāruṇya*, *svāmitva*, *sauśīlya*, *vātsalya*, *saulabhya*, *jñāna*, *śakti* and so on, and explains each quality in detail .

All these qualities instil a sense of great confidence in the devotees who resort to His feet. The author now takes up the term *Nārāyaṇa* of the *Dvayamantra* for discussion. Here the term is capable of bringing to light all the qualities mentioned above, and the Lord alone is the repository of all these

qualities. The term *caraṇau* indicates that as far as the devotees are concerned it is absolutely essential to resort to the Holy Feet of the Lord for protection and liberation and the Holy Feet themselves are capable of granting the desired result as they are an integral part of the Lord.

A question is raised as to why the Lord's *caraṇa* is *upāya*. The feet of the Lord should be resorted by the servant (*jīva*) and hence it is appropriate says the author. He opines that the *arcāvatāra* is ideally suited for *dvayānusandhāna* and this *caraṇagrahaṇa* cannot be overlooked (*anatikramaṇīyam*). If we take the term *śaraṇam* to mean house or protection then, too *caraṇau* becomes an *upāya*. So, the term *Śrīmat* means, the goal to be achieved and the way to achieve it also. So, there is *prāpyaprāpaka aikyam*, according to *ācāryas*.

Then the verb *prapadye* is taken up for elucidation by the author. It is taken first in the sense of *gati* i.e 'to reach', through *manas*, *vāk* and *kāya*. Each act has its own result, but when the three are combined together in one single act, then the effect becomes very significant too. But, through the rule of "*jñānān mokṣa*", *manas* is of greater importance than *vāk* or *kāya*. *Prapatti* is possible only when we realise our total helplessness and know that the Lord alone is the *upāya* and *upeya*.

Secondly the term *prapadye* means "moving towards God". But by the rule – *gatyarthā dhātavaḥ buddhyarthāḥ*, physical movement means mental approach towards God. A question is raised as to whether *prapaṭṭi* and *bharanyāsa* are different. The author states that the mental approach leads to *mahāviśvāsa* and hence it includes *bharanyāsa* also (Folio 48 a) - *bharanyāsātmakam prapadanameva anuṣṭheyamiti nirṇītam.*[1] But this *prapatti* should be requested; for, without prayerful attitude (*prārthanāmatiḥ*), *prapatti* is meaningless. He quotes from the *Ahirbudhnya saṁhitā*[2] starting with *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ....* and discusses about the *ṣaḍvidha prapatti* where five are *aṅgas* and *ātmanikṣepa* is *aṅgin* similar to *aṣṭāṅgayoga* and says that *nikṣepa*, *nyāsa*, *saṁnyāsa*, *tyāga* and *śaraṇāgati* are all synonymous. It does not stand in need of any other accessories, except of course the *prārthanā*.

The author then discusses the use of the present tense in the verb *prapadye*. He opines that because of this usage doubts may arise about the permanent nature of the result of *prapatti* because it is done only once as contrasted with *bhakti yoga* which one can perform till death, any number of times. He refers to *Brahma sūtra* 4.1.1: *Āvṛttirasakṛdupadeśāt*. But, he concludes that since *Śruti* and *Smṛti* refer to "*sakṛdeva*" etc., *prapatti* should

1 *Rahaṣyatrayasāram*, p. 600.

2 37 - 28 & 29.

be done only once and defines *prapatti* as *bhagavatpravṛtti-virodhi svapravṛtti nivṛttiḥ.*

The second sentence explains that *sādhana* is twofold: *siddha* and *sādhya* and the *phala* is twofold: *bhagvat prāpati* and *kaiṅkarya prāpti.* Only the highest *puruṣārtha* should be aspired for namely *paramapada.* Ācāryas are of the opinion that the Lord grants this *paramapada* out of His own will – *sarveśvaraḥ svayameva paramampadam prayacchati* (Folio 52).

Explaining the term *Śrīmat* in the first sentence of the *Dvaya mantra,* the author states that the Lord who is ever-just (*daṇḍadhara*) and wants to punish the erring soul, is tempered by Śrī who revives the soul and pleads for its redemption. So, the *nityayogitva* of Śrī is implied. The term *namaḥ* represents a prayerful attitude (*baddhāñjaliputāḥ, hṛṣtāḥ*). The agency and the claim for the fruits of action should be given up totally. The only aim of *kaiñkarya* should be *bhagavanmukhollāsa.*

The third section is devoted to the discussion of the *Caramaśloka.* This brings out in full the meaning of the *Dvayamantra.* It is called *carama* because it speaks of the fourth or last *upāya,* the other three being *karma, jñāna* and *bhakti yogas.*

The first term of the *carma śloka* is *sarvadharmān.* By the term *dharma* is implied the means for *bhoga* and *mokṣa* in conformity with the

śāstras. The plural usage is indicative of the plurality of the means viz *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*. He quotes from the *Bhagavad Gītā* to prove the efficacy of performing *karma yoga*. By *karma* is meant *nitya* and *naimittika karmas* i.e. daily and enjoined duties. In *jñāna yoga* too there is plurality *viz.*, *sad*, *dahara*, *śāṇḍilya*, *madhu*, *upakośala*, *paryaṅka*, and so on. As far as *bhakti yoga* is concerned, *dhyāna*, *arcana*, *praṇāma etc.*, are the various methods of propitiating the Lord.

The author enumerates the different ways in which the Lord can be served – by washing the temples (whereby the Lord washes away the devotees' sins); by lighting lamps of oil or ghee for the Lord, the devotee is taken through the path of light in a well-lit *vimāna*; by propitating the idol of Lord Nṛsiṁha, duly installed, a devotee attains *mokṣa*; by repeating the Holy names of the Lord, the devotee attains *paramapada* (*yāti brahma sanātanam*) and so on.

The author then speaks of the glory that a devotee gets by propitiating the Lord with *ūrdhvapuṇdra* by quoting from *Smṛti* texts. All *karmas* are not meant to be given up because we have the scripture *yajñena dānena tapasā anāśakena brahmaṇā vividiṣanti*, *Smṛtis* too declare that *karmas* (duties) are a means for liberation. By the term *śaraṇam vraja*, *śaraṇāgati* is implied. Different castes have different duties and the duties enjoined upon one according to one's *varṇa* and *āśrama* should not be given up at any point of

time by one desirous of liberation. Hence the author states: *sarva dharma tyāgapūrvakaśaraṇa-varaṇakaraṇam ramaṇīyam.*

Prapatti is independent (*nirapekṣā*) and the *viśiṣṭa vidhi viz. śaraṇam vraja* does not depend on any other *upāya* for its completion. It cannot brook the idea of introducing any other *upāya* like, the *Brahmāstra*. So in the first *pāda*, the author states the essential nature of that which should be given up; in the second *pāda*, he speaks of the *tyāgaprakāra*-the way of giving up and in the third *pāda*, '*mām*' he speaks of the *upāya* that should be chosen; and here all the qualities of *vātsalya* etc. which go to make up a *śaraṇya* should qualify the term '*mām*'. By the term *ekam*, Lord Hari who is the *ādipuruṣa* is meant and this should be used in the sense of *eva* only i.e. stressing the independent nature of the *upāya*; and *prapatti* itself is only a mere pretext (*vyājamātra*) and is not dependent on *bhakti yoga*. *Ekam* is used in the sense of *vilakṣaṇa* or uniqueness. The term *śaraṇam vraja* implies *manasā cintaya* according to the rule – *gatyarthāḥ dhātavaḥ buddhyarthāḥ*. Realising that the Lord is the *antaryāmin* of all living things, one should be in consonance with them.

The author points out that *antimasmaraṇa* is not a necessity for a *prapanna*. The author quotes in support, the *Varāhacaramaśloka viz.*,

स्थिते मनसि सुस्वस्थे शरीरे सति यो नरः।
धातु साम्ये स्थिते स्मर्ता विधरूपं च मामजम् ॥
ततस्तं म्रियमाणं तु काष्ठपाषाणसन्निभम् ।
अहं स्मरामि मद्भक्तं नयामि परमां गतिम्॥

The author explains each word of the *śloka* in minute detail. He now goes back to the term *māmekam* in *caramaśloka* and states that the Lord has all the six qualities: *jñāna, bala, śakti, tejas, vīrya* and *aiśvarya* in full, and hence is capable of granting the fruit of liberation. For a *prapanna* all *prārabdha karmas* are wiped out. Then takes place a discussion on the subdivision of the *pāpas*. It is not a hard and fast rule that all *prārabdha karmas* are exhausted by one's birth and death and hence the necessity of *prapatti*. Future sins done involuntarily will be removed by *yajña, dāna, tapas* and *anāśaka* (fasting). The involuntary sins of a *prapanna* are destroyed by the Lord by giving him some *alpadaṇḍas*.

Once the *śeṣatva jñāna* has dawned, now it is the Lord's responsibility to take care of the *prapanna*. *Bhagavat prāpti* is the only desire and just as a gem shines forth in all its brilliance after it is well-cleaned, so too, the *pratibandhas* having been removed, the *prapanna jīva* shines forth in full effulgence ready and fit to receive God's Grace by attaining *Sāyujya*. For such a *prapanna* there is no return to *samsāradaśā* as the last *Brahma sūtra* states – *anāvṛttiśśabdādanāvṛttiśśabdāt* (IV,iv,22).

A study of this text indicates the author's profound scholarship, his clear understanding of the three secrets imparted by his *ācāryas* and his ability to quote at will from *Śruti* and *Smṛti* texts. He refers to the *Prapanna Pārijata*

of Nadādūr Ammāḷ and quotes from *Tattvasāra*, *Rahasya Trayasāra*, *Gadyas*, *Śotraratna*, *Pāñcarātra* texts like *Ahirbudnya saṁhitā* and *Lakṣmī Tantra*. His language is simple and there is clarity of thought and expression.

Rahasyatrayārthavicāra[1]

This work is a metrical compostion in 22 verses that explains the three *rahasyas* viz. the *aṣṭākṣara*, the *dvaya mantra* and the *carama śloka*, very briefly. The first seven verses deal with the first secret. The teacher imparts these secrets to the disciple who is desirous of liberation. The Lord is the *jagatkāraṇa* and He is the protector. Lord Hari is of the nature of *jñāna* and *ānanda* and He has them as His qualities also. Explaining the word *Nārāyaṇa* the author states that He is the abode of all beings of the universe and He resides in all of them as their inner self (*antaryamin*). The *jīvas* are eternally subservient to Him. The relationship between the *jīva* and the Lord, the way to reach Him and the prayer for this is the meaning of the first secret.

जीवेशयोश्च सम्बन्धः सम्बन्धानुगुणक्रिया।
तत्फलप्रार्थना चेति मन्त्रार्थमनुसन्दधे॥

The author then goes on to explain the *Dvayamantra* in the next seven verses. Here, the Lord's eternal association with Śrī who is the abode of all good qualities like *sauśīlya*, *saulabhya*, *vātsalya*, and *sārvajñatā* and Her

1 By Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni. Palm leaf Manuscript deposited with GOML, Madras, folio 185 of R 3671 (f).

puruṣakāra (mediation) are mentioned. Śrī purifies all the *jīvas* and leads them to the Lord. The author prays to the Lord to obliterate all his bad deeds as he has performed *bharanyāsa* (surrender) with *mahāviśvāsa* by the grace of his *ācārya* and hence does not stand in need of *antimaśmṛti*.

The last seven verses deal with the *carama śloka*.The author, incapable of performing *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *karma yogas* has resorted to the feet of the Lord which is only a mere pretext for the Lord to extend His Grace. He alone is the bestroyer of all fruits. He is the way and He is the goal to be achieved. With this, the author rests assured and is free from worries.

This small metrical piece is written on the lines of Vedāntadeśika's *Nyāsadaśaka*. The author's ability to condense into simple verse form the quintessence of the *Rahasyatraya* is evident.

Vāsantikāpariṇayam[1]

In literature, drama is said to be the most beautiful medium of expression -

काव्येषु नाटकं रम्यम्।

1 by Śrī Śaṭhakopa Yatī, 7th Jīyar of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha, Ed. by Narasiṁhasastri; published in Vidyatarangini press, Mysore, 1912, (Telugu). The editor of this book has mistakenly mentioned the author as the 1st Jīyar in the title page.

True to this statement, the author of the above work, Śrī Śaṭhakopa Svāmī, the 7th Pontiff of Ahobila Maṭha (Vaṇśaṭhāri III - 1513-1522) has presented in lucid style, the wedding of the Divine couple *viz.* Lord Nṛsiṁha and Ceñcu Lakṣmī called Vāsantikā, the daughter of a local hunter chieftain Śūrasena. The setting is at Ahobilapura and Prahalāda is also one of the characters in this five-act drama. It begins like all other Sanskrit dramas, with an invocatory verse called Nāndī –

पारावारसुतापयोधरतटीकण्ठौ समालम्बते
स श्रेयांसि चतुर्भुजो रचयताल्लक्ष्मीनृकण्ठीरवः । etc.

अकुतोजनुषाभाविभाषया यस्य हेषया।
अस्तु मे वस्तु मेधायै कन्धरोपरि सैन्धवम् ॥

Then the Sūtradhāra and Māriṣa enter the stage and through their dialogue we come to know that the vernal festival *(Vasantotsava)* of Lord Narasiṁha was being celebrated and this drama was to be staged on that occasion.

Act I

The verses 1-18 are introductory in character. Lord Nṛsiṁha was spending his time dressed like a hunter along with Gālava (a vidūṣaka) in a forest near Garuḍācala, Ahobila. Indra and Mātali pay their respects to Him. According to Indra's statement to Mātali, Lakṣmī cursed a *gandharva* princess to be born in a hunter's tribe. The story goes that Lakṣmī pleased by the princess' music offered her a boon by which the *gandharva* princess wanted

Ahobileśvara Himself as her husband. This enraged Lakṣmi and she cursed the princess thus:

मुग्धेमदीयदयितं दयितं तवापि सम्पृच्छ्य साहसवती यदवश्चयो माम्।
आसाद्यवञ्चकिरातकुलेऽवतारं काङ्क्षां भज त्वमिति तां कमला शशाप॥[1]

The Kirāta girl Vāsantikā (daughter of Śūrasena) came to the same forest along with her friend to worship the Vanadevatā. As the Lord saw her, He fell in love with her. On seeing Him, Vāsantikā's friends leave the place. The Lord and Vāsantikā also leave for Garuḍācala.

Act II

The scene is located at Śūrasena's harem. Kādambaka, a chamberlain, was asked by the Kirāta chief to verify the veracity of the statement that his daughter was blessed by the forest deity to have a suitable husband in the immediate future.

Madhurikā, attendant of Vāsantikā confirms the news and informs the chamberlain that ever since Vāsantikā saw the Lord of Ahobila she was in deep love with Him. Vāsantikā tells her friends–

सकलहृदयान्तर्यामी स्वामी मम भावमवगत्य स्वरूपं दर्शितवा-
नासीत्। (p.18)

1 I, 19.

A sooth-sayer Vijñānavatī was also sent for, to predict if the Lord of Ahobila would marry Vāsantikā. The sooth-sayer confirmed it and said that even the Lord was love-sick ever since He saw her in the forest.

Act III

Māyāmaya and Śaṅkarī enter the stage and talk about the Lord's love-sickness. Māyāmaya was sent by the Lord Himself on the mission of bringing Vāsantikā out of her harem under some pretext, to the garden.

The Lord and Gālava (vidūṣaka) roam about in the garden situated between the slopes of the Vedagiri and Garuḍācala, and on the bank of the river Bhavanāśinī. Gālava fails in his effort to divert the mind of the Lord.

Through the Lord's own Yogamāyā, they both enter the garden in the outskirts of the hunter's village, towards the north of Garuḍācala. Māyāmaya sent earlier by the Lord becomes a beautiful parrot and entices Vāsantikā into the garden. The Lord and Vāsantikā meet each other, and the parrot vanishes. As Vāsantikā's mother arrives there, the Lord and Vāsantikā had to part hurriedly.

Act IV

Two bees enter the stage and reveal that Gandharvarāja and his wife came to the earth and tried to pacify Lakṣmī who had earlier cursed their daughter to be born as Vāsantikā.

The Lord and Vanadevatā enter the stage and she tried to divert the mind of the love-sick Lord. Gālava brings information that Vāsantikā's marrrriage is near at hand. Vanadevatā goes to Garuḍācala to make arrangements for the wedding. Gālava informs the Lord that all the efforts of Vāsantikā's friends to relieve her of the love-fever proved futile. He also informed the Lord that he met Lakṣmī on his way who enquired about the love-affair of the Lord and the hunter girl.

Both the Lord and Gālava then reach the garden of Vanadevatā, by Yogamāyā. Vāsantikā who came there to worship Manmatha, met the Lord there. They exchange compliments but had to part hurriedly because the girl's parents had finished the vernal festival and were leaving for their home-town. Vidūṣaka and the Lord also exit, hoping for an early marrige.

Act V

Prahlāda enters the stage. He had spent sleepless nights worried by the Lord's love-sickness. Nārada enters the stage and informs that Lakṣmī Herself had agreed to the marriage of the Lord and Vāsantikā.

The Vidūṣaka says that the *Smṛti* texts point out that some *pativratā* ladies are also known to marry their husbands to girls of their husbands' choice, for the continuity of their *māṅgalya*.

अस्ति खल्वेवं सुमङ्गलीव्रतकल्पः -
माङ्गल्यसूत्रस्थास्नुत्वं काङ्क्षमाणाः पतिव्रताः।
कामप्यभिमतां कन्यां भर्त्रे दद्युरिति स्मृतिः ॥(V. 10)

All the gods arrive on the scene. Brahmā becomes the priest and the marriage of the Lord and Vāsantikā takes place with great pomp and eclat.

The author's style is very simple and lucid. There is alliteration too, in the description of Vāsantikā by Lord Narasiṁha.

गुरुतरकुचकुम्भो कोरके कोरकेऽस्याः
पदमवनिरुहाणां पल्लवे पल्लवे च ।
परभृतमिथुनानां पञ्चमे पञ्चमेऽहं
वचनमपि हहाहानुस्मरामि भ्रमामि ॥ (III. 9)
मन्दा गतिः मदवदक्षि कुचौ च
कुम्भौ दन्तौ कपोलफलकौ करसम्पदूरू।
त्वं हस्तिनी तदपि किं चकितासि
गन्तुं हा हन्त हन्त विदितं हरिशब्दयोगात् ॥ (III. 20)

Lord Narasiṁha's love-sick condition is described below –

चन्दनं विरहिणां विनिन्दनं चन्द्रिका कदनवीततन्द्रिका।
मन्मथो भवति हन्त हन्मथो मालिका विरहतापमूलिका ॥ (IV, p. 45)

We have the beautiful description of Vāsantikā at first sight by the Lord.

अक्ष्णोः प्राक्तनपुण्यतन्त्रमतनोरायुष्यसिद्धौषधं
शृङ्गारायतनं विधेः वरतनूसृष्टिक्रियामातृका ।
रागोद्दीपनकेलिसिद्धघुटिका लावण्यरङ्गस्थली
कैषा शैशवयौवनान्तरचरी योषा दरीदृश्यते ॥(I . 28)

and

कविता वनिता चैव स्वयमेवागता वरा।
बलादाकृष्यमाणा चेत् सरसा विरसा भवेत् ॥(I . 38)

In conclusion it may be said that this drama provides the genealogy of the first seven Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha. It gives the title of the seventh Jīyar as *sarvatantra svatantra* and *kavitārkika kaṇṭhīrava*. The author of this drama was probably the *guru* of Allasāni Peddana the Telugu poet of Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya of Vijayanagar and he received the ochre robes from Parāṅkuśa Muni, the 6th Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha who was honoured by Mukunda Deva Rāya of Orissa and the King of Karṇātaka.

An extract from the introductory portion of the drama is furnished below as it provides the genealogy of the first seven Jīyars of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha :

v.5. आसीत् व्यासस्य वीप्सा शुकमुनियमकं पुण्डरीकद्विरुक्तिः
प्रह्लादस्यानुवादः प्रथितयतिकुलप्राग्रणीर्वण्शठारिः ।
प्राह्लानां यस्य राज्ञां पदविनतिकृतामष्टवर्णोपदेशात्
अष्टैश्वर्याष्टभोगानदित समधिकामष्टदिक्ख्याततां च ॥

नाटचं किल निरङ्कुशब्रह्मचर्यव्रतम् ...

चतुस्सप्ततिसंख्यानिष्णातवैष्णवकुले भद्रास
नाधिपत्यं पुराविद उदाहरन्ति ।

v.7. नारायणो मुनिवरोऽथ पराङ्कुशार्यः
श्रीश्रीनिवासमुनिरप्यथ वण्शठारिः।
पश्चात् पराङ्कुशमहामुनिराविरासीत्
इत्थं जना जगति हन्त न जानते किम्॥

v.10. तस्माल्लब्ध्वा तुरीयाश्रममसमसमुज्जृम्भिशास्त्राम्बुराशिः
प्रादुर्भूतप्रबोधामृतकरमुषिताशेषमोहान्धकारः।
गाढध्यानावधानप्रमदवहहयग्रीवदेवप्रसादो-
दश्चत् साहित्यमार्गो जगति विजयते वण्शठारिर्यतीन्द्रः॥

The Genealogical Table as construed from the *Vāsantikāpariṇaya* is as follows:-

Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa I (1379-1458)

|

Nārāyaṇamuni I (1458-73)

|

Parāṅkuśārya I (1473-85)

|

Śrīnivāsamuni I (1485 -93)

|

Vaṇ Śaṭhāri II (1493 -98)

|

Ṣaṣṭha Parāṅkuśamuni II (1499 -1513)

|

Vaṇ Śaṭhari III (1513 - 22)

The author was the son of Śrīnivāsa, son of *Caruvācālaya*, son of Tiruvanantārya of Bharadvāja gotra, native of Bālavana agrahāra of Tuṇḍīramaṇḍala. He was praised by Vāhinīpati, a great poet. His original name was stated to be Tirumala and he had the title of *Kavitārkika Kaṇṭhīrava.*

Puruṣakāra Mīmāṁsā [1]

The *Puruṣakāra Mīmāṁsā* occupies an important place in the philosophical contribution of the Jīyars of Ahobila Maṭha. It consists of about 183 verses approximately, and deals with Śrī as the mediator (*puruṣakāra*) in great detail. Studied along with its lucid commentary *Maṇidīpikā* by Śrīśaileśa, it helps in understanding the intricacies of the concept of Śrī as *puruṣakāra*. Each and every word of the *śloka* of Nārāyaṇa Muni is explained, providing scriptural evidence from *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Viṣṇupurāṇa etc. He quotes from the works of earlier ācāryas like Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, Kūreśvara, Pārāśara Bhaṭṭa and Vedāntadeśika.

Nārāyaṇa Muni in the very opening verse of the work, has summarised the central theme of his work, thus :

स्वतन्त्रः स्वेच्छया सृष्टिस्थितिसंहारमोक्षणैः।
यत्समक्षं क्रीडतीशः तां भजे लोकमातरम्॥

He states that creation, maintenance, dissolution and liberation of the universe are the functions of the Lord who is the only independent principle. All these activities take place due to His own free will. He performs the

1 By Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni (14th Jīyar), See *Concept of Śrī as Puruṣakāra according to the Puruṣakāra Mīmāṁsā of Nārāyaṇa Muni* – unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Madras by G. Sakuntala, July, 1992.

activities in the presence of the Divine Mother Lakṣmī, which activity becomes their sport.

From this simple verse, we can conclude that Viṣṇu and Śrī form the Divine couple, and that Lord Viṣṇu alone has the full fledged responsibility of creation, dissolution etc. The role of Śrī can be appreciated as the Mother of the universe since she is the consort of the Lord. The subsequent verse –

स्वयंव्यक्ते रङ्गधाम्नि तल्पे वातूलतूलके।
निवसन्तौ नमाम्याद्यौ दम्पती जनकौ विधेः॥

qualifies the meaning of the first verse by declaring that this divine couple (Lord Raṅganātha and Raṅganāyaki at Śrīraṅgam) form the parents of Brahmā, the four-faced god. These two verses taken together, mean that Śrī is ascribed the quality of *jagajjanakatva* along with the Lord. The aim of *Puruṣakāra Mīmāṁsā* is to decide beyond doubt, if Śrī the *patnī* of the Lord can lay claim to all the features of the Lord, in the manner He possesses them; *patnyāḥ pativadīdṛktvam asti neti nirūpyate* (v. 4 a). According to Nārāyaṇa Muni, Lord alone is the direct means of salvation and Śrī's *upāyatva* is explained through her status as an attribute of the Lord and never as the substantive i.e. the Lord.[1] Regarding *nigraha* also, since *Śrī* is purely of the nature of *anugraha* also She is not directly connected with it and She never desires to display it (*Śaktiḥ Śrīyosti neccheti*).

1 See G. Sakuntala's Thesis, p. 91.

For Nārāyaṇa Muni the *viśeṣaṇatva* of Śrī generates her *kāraṇatva*, *upāsyatva* and *prāpyatva*. Her creation is marked by pure unalloyed grace. Since the Lord is qualified eternally by Śrī, whatever qualities the Lord has, can also be shared by Śrī. One cannot imagine a substance without an attribute and all the features of the substantive can be ascribed to the attribute which is a part and parcel of the substantive. So, Śrī becomes the soul of the entire universe which forms Her body. She becomes a *Śeṣiṇī* and is coeval with the Lord in all His aspects except in *nigraha*. Whenever the Lord is mentioned as *kāraṇa*, *upāsya*, *upāya* and *prāpya* the presence of Śrī is also included. To comprehend the meaning of vv. 23, 24 Śrīśailesa's commentary is very helpful. To resolve the apparent contradiction that *Brahmalakṣaṇa* cannot be applied to Śrī, according to *Tattva Ṭīkā* and that the divine couple constitute the cause of the universe according to *Nyāya siddhāñjana*, he says that the qualities of *mātṛtva* and *anugraha* of Śrī were not taken into consideration while speaking of *jagatkāraṇatva*.[1] Absence of certain qualities in Śrī does not make Her the Brahman technically, but this does not deny Her the status of being equal to Him in other aspects.

Explaining why Śrī cannot be accepted to be the agent of all cosmic activities involving *nigraha* in v. 23. Śrīsaileśa points out that

1 See *Maṇidīpikā*, G. Sakuntala's thesis, p.21.

samastakāryahetutvam, agency regarding the individual destruction, creation of hell etc are unique to the Lord and are absent in Śrī.

स्मस्तकार्यहेतुत्वमित्यत्र व्यष्टिसंहारनारकादिकार्यस्यापि प्रतिपत्तेः तद्धेतुत्वस्य निग्रहरहिततयादेव्यामसंभवेन समस्तकार्यहेतुत्वं पतिमात्रनिष्ठमित्यभ्युपेयम्।

Nārāyaṇa Muni's final verdict on Śrī's position is stated in vv. 47, 48 – the characteristic of Brahman namely causality regarding the universe applies only to the Lord and not to both. Creatorship means "being the agent of creation" i.e being the locus of volition which is favourable for creation, not merely being *vibhu* since in that sense, Time which is all-pervasive should also be accepted as creator. So *vibhu cetanatva* cannot be the qualification required of a creator. So the *sāmyatva* between the Lord and Śrī should be understood without infringing upon the characteristies of Brahman, mentioned in the *śrutis* and *sūtras*.

Verses 50, 52 mention the qualities common to Śrī and Viṣṇu which make their *dāmpatya* eternal. Hence there is no difficulty in explaining *sāmya* and *aikya* between them. *Sāmya* according to Nārāyaṇa Muni consists in their being the parents of the whole universe. The term *jagat* in *jagajjanakatva* (v. 53) should mean the world of living beings and this quality of parenthood is found in the Lord only and Śrī acquiries this indirectly by virtue of her sharing the joy of creation along with the Lord. The *pati-patnībhāva* between the Lord

and Śrī is taken up for discussion with reference to *sāmyatva* (vv. 56, 57). *Sāmya* is understood as *śeṣitva* which is twofold:

a. with reference to two *vibhūtis* and

b. with reference to one another in being *pati* and *patnī*. Normally this indicates *svāmitva* and so there is no question of one being subordinate or superior to the other.

Then Nārāyaṇa Muni speaks of *aikya* or oneness between Lord and Śrī. It can be – (a). *prakāraikya* (oneness of the mode) because of extreme similarity between husband and wife.

(b). *śeṣatva* of the entire creation including *nitya* and *līlāvibhūtis*.

(c). *ātmahavis* i.e., oneness with regard to being recipients of *havis* in the form of all the souls.

There are some critics who argue that it is cumbersome to accept the divine couple Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa as two persons (v. 64) and as such it will be parsimonious to accept one single deity. Nārāyaṇa Muni argues that if parsimony is the only criterion then the pluarality of *jīvas* can be dismissed and only one *jīva* should be accepted, which is however rejected by Śrī Rāmānuja. Statements involving *abheda* between Lord and Śrī can be explained by *Rāmasugrīvayoraikyam* (v. 65) without undermining the essential difference between each other. In some passages where Śrī is stated to be the *śakti* of the Lord, it should be taken to mean *śakti* as the *viśeṣaṇa* of

the Lord (v. 67). At the time of creation, this *sakti* is identified with Śrī and She can be taken as *sahakārikāraṇa*. The words *samāna niyatayā* do not mean that Śrī has all cosmic activities as her sport as he is incapable of *nigraha*. Hence, this expression means *sāmarasya*, as having identical taste - *bharturlīlāyāmaikarasyāt tadanuguṇatvopapattiriti bhāvaḥ* - Śrī induces the Lord to action only through *sāmaraṣya* as expressed in following–

नाज्ञया न च दानेन प्रेरकत्वं न याच्ञया v. 68 a

In v. 74, Nārāyaṇa Muni observes that the Lord is referred to in some texts as *nārīmaya* because He is the *ādhāra* of Śrī who represents all womanhood; and Śrī is referred to as *Nārāyaṇātmikā* because she is the consort of the Lord. But there is no fear of *dvairājya* or dual rulership because of the special status of *Viṣṇupatnī* accorded to Śrī. The commentator Śrīśaileśa asserts that the definition of *Īśvara* given in *Nyāyasiddhāñjana* as *svajñānasvetara-samastadravya-śarīratvam* is intended to exclude Brahmā, Rudra and other gods from the scope, but not Śrī.[1]

Verse 80 is significant in that it declares that only the Supreme Brahman qualified by Śrī should be resorted to on the authority of the definition of *prapatti*, the *mantra* which speaks of it and the injunction which ordains it,

1 See ***Maṇidīpikā***, G. Sakuntala's thesis, p.124.

न्यासस्य लक्षणान्मन्त्रात् विधेः व्याख्यान्तरादपि।
भाष्यादेः संप्रदायाच्च प्रपत्तव्यः परः पुमान्॥

The definition of *prapatti viz. ananyasādhya* is by one Bharata Muni. The *mantra* which ordains *prapatti* is *Dvaya* and the *vidhi* which ordains it is in the *Carama śloka - māmekam śaraṇam vraja* (*Bhagavad Gītā* , xvii, 66).

Verses 83 - 85 explain the exact role of 'Śrī' as a viśeṣaṇa of the Lord being ever associated with Him. Hence she becomes the recipient of the *bhara* of those who surrender to the Lord also. Even during the stage of *nyāsa*, She remains an attribute of the Lord, destroys the sins of the devotees, generates a taste in them for the Lord who forms the goal, produces a conviction that Lord alone is the *upāya* and ensures His grace for them.

विशेषणतया न्यासदशायामपि तिष्ठति ।
पापनाशं प्राप्यरुचिं प्रापकाध्यवसायिताम्॥

In v. 91 the word *aikarasya* should be interpreted to mean *sāmarasya* according to Śrīsaileśa.

The Lord alone is *daṇḍadhara* and Śrī can never afford to get angry because she is free from *nigraha*. The *śeṣatva* of Śrī covers every living being other than the Lord. The chief criterion of the *upāyatva* of Śrī is the removal of the impediments i.e. *nigraha nivṛtti*. Śrīśaileśa quotes profusely from

Śrutis and *Smṛtis* and Deśika's *Rahaṣyatrayasāra, Rāmānuja's Gadyas*, and *Vedārthasaṅgraha* in his commentary to illustrate this point.[1]

The discussion then shifts to the status of Śrī as *viśeṣaṇa* of the Lord who is called *siddhopāya*. How can anyone state that Śrī becomes an *upalakṣaṇa* (indicator) in the first part of the *Dvayamantra* (v. 100)? The *Rahaṣyatrayasāra*, the *Gadyabhāṣya*, and the *Catuśślokībhāṣya* of Deśika do not prove Śrī as either an *upalakṣaṇa* or an *upāya*. Their intention is only to show Her as a *viśeṣaṇa* of the Lord. Śrīśaileśa in his commentary justifies Nārāyaṇa Muni's stand and states that there is no question of duality of *upāyas*. The *upāyatva* of Śrī lies in Her conferring the experience of complete bliss whereas the *upāyatva* of the Lord lies in His conferring such an experience after shedding his wrath.[2]

The *puruṣakāratva* and *nityayoga* of Śrī are acceptable on all hands but Śrī as an *upāya* is explained only through her status as *viśeṣaṇa* and not as the chief *upāya* like Her Lord as in Vedāntadeśika's *Rahaṣyatrayasāra* and *Nyāsatilaka*:

लक्ष्म्याः पुरुषकारत्व-नित्ययोगौ सतां समौ।
विशेषणतया न्यासविषयत्वमिहाधिकम्॥

1 See *Maṇidīpikā*, G. Sakuntala's thesis, pp. 174 - 201.

2 Ibid. p. 222.

In v. 107 Nārāyaṇa Muni states that the idea of Śrī's *viśeṣaṇatva* is reinforced by the *Brahmasūtra* (III:2.20) *vṛddhihrāsa* etc. All the illustrations given to support Śrī's *viśeṣaṇatva* become justified on the analogy of the *dṛṣṭāntas*. Śriśaileśa's commentary is elaborate and he states that illustrations need not be taken to correspond to the illustrated in all aspects. The sun reflected in ponds, wells, rivers and vessels may have different shapes, but still the sun cannot be associated with those shapes.

परमात्मनः चेतनाचेतनरूपनानावस्थानेऽपि चेतनाचेतनगतदोषाननुषङ्गेन दार्ष्टान्तिक- दृष्टान्तयोः वैधर्म्यं नास्ति।[1]

The status of Śrī as *upāya* which prompts one to perform *bharanyāsa* to the Lord is the result of her being the attribute of the Lord. This idea is brought out in v.110.

यद्यप्यात्महविर्यज्ञे प्राधान्यम् उभयोरपि।
विशेषणं शरण्यस्य भरन्यासे तथापि सा ॥
भरात्मन्यासयोर्भेदादन्योन्यमतिचारतः ॥

The commentator quotes from the *Rāmāyana*, *Sāttvatasaṁhita* and *Viṣṇusahasranāma stotra*, Yāmuna and Parāśara to state that Śrī is an adjective of the Lord (*śaranya*) at the time of *śaraṇāgati*. He describes *nyāsa* to be of three kinds - *svarūpanyāsa* (offering one's essential nature), *bharanyāsa* (reposing one's burden) and *phalanyāsa* (offering the fruit of

1 See *Maṇidīpikā*, G. Sakuntala's thesis, p. 246.

one's endeavour). In all these, Śrī is only the *viśeṣana* and never the *pradhāna* like the Lord.

In v.117 Nārāyaṇa Muni clearly declares that Lord Viṣṇu alone forms the cause of the universe, that He alone has to be resorted to for liberation and that He becomes the protector as well as the goal along with Śrī. Nārāyaṇa Muni is puzzled as to why critics do not relish the attribute and substantive principle of Śrī and Viṣṇu who form a single *śeṣī* principle with identity of taste (*aikarasya*) in all functions. In v. 135:

यदिच्छयैव यत्प्रीत्यै शासनं निग्रहादि च।
तत्र निग्राह्यजातीयविसजातीयतामतिः॥

the author declares that Śrī belongs to *Īśvarakoṭi* and not *jīvakoṭi* because the Lord commands and chastises all the beings only according to the wish and for the pleasure of Śrī and hence, it is logical to conclude that she belongs to a category different from *jīvas*. There is no problem of *dvairājya* because the relation between Lord and Śrī is similar to the relation between radiance (*prabhā*) and the Sun. Hence, one adds to the excellence of the other and there is no other entity which affects that excellence *i.e.* there is inseparable relationship (*apṛthaksiddhatva*) between them which only confirms the *viśeṣaṇatva* of Śrī.

In v.161 the author mentions Pillai Lokācārya by name and tries to reconcile the differences between him and Vedāntadeśika. According to him

both are *āptaṣ* (v. 164) or benefactors to humanity and their works should not be subjected to narrow interpretations and declares that the works of Deśika and Pillai Lokācārya should be considered in the light of their intentions and we should draw parallels rather than highlight the apparent differences. Even as the *Pūrvamīmāṁsā* of Jaimini and *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa are considered to be *ekaśāstra*, the work of Pillai Lokācārya and Vedāntadeśika should constitute a single *śāstra* as far their intention and ultimate import is concerned.

यथा च धर्ममीमांसा-ब्रह्ममीमांसयोर्द्वयोः।
अविरुद्धार्थतात्पर्यात् ऐकशास्त्र्यं समर्थितम्॥ (171)

In the succeeding two verses he pays glowing tributes to *Śrīvacana-bhūṣaṇam* and other works of Pillai Lokācārya. In v.176, the author states that instead of indulging in useless discussions one should concentrate on the *upāya* and *phala* as suggested by these *ācāryas*.

The catholicity of approach in this work is to be commended. The author breathes the spirit of synthesis into his work and teaches the lesson of unity in diversity to the Śrīvaiṣṇava community as a whole. The author's scholarship and his thorough knowledge of not only Deśika's work but those of Pillai Lokācārya as well, his ability to condense the essence of philosophy into verse form is all evident from this work. Śrīśaileśa's lengthy commentary elucidates this poetic work in prose form.

Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha vibhāga [1]

The *Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgrahavibhāga* is a commentary on the *Gītārthasaṅgraha* of Śrī Yāmunācārya. It is the first and perhaps only one of its kind in the post-Vedāntadeśika period to interpret the Gītā in the Viśiṣṭādvaita tradition.

The author of this prose commentary is Nārāyaṇa Muni and from the *maṅgala śloka* and colophon of the text, it is reasonable to infer that he is the 14th Pontiff of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha. The title *Vibhāga* is significant in that the term refers not only to the division of verses into *ṣaṭkas* as was done by Śrī Yāmuna, but also means an explanatory treatise or analysis of the contents of the *Gītārthasaṅgraha.*

Initially, the author pays his obeisance to Lord Hayagrīva and prays for His grace to elucidate the meanings contained in the treatises of Śrī Yāmuna, Śrī Rāmānuja and Svāmī Deśika - the *trayīmaulisūris.* Beginning with the first verse of Yāmuna which is *maṅgala śloka* as it opens directly with *vastunirdeśa,* the author defines *bhakti* on the lines of Śrī Rāmānuja as *mahanīyaviṣaye prītiḥ* i.e. love or devotion for the most worshipful being *viz.* Lord Nārāyaṇa. He terms the *Gītā* as *Upaniṣatsārasaṅkalanātmikā* i.e. as the

1 By Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni (14th Jīyar), See *Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha vibhāga* (an edition with English translation), unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation by K.N.C. Sumitra, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1995.

epitome of the very essence of the Vedāntas which teaches us that Lord Nārāyaṇa who is the abode of innumerable auspicious qualities is the Supreme Reality who can be reached through *bhakti* and *prapatti*.

In the first six chapters the performance of *karmayoga* and *jñānayoga* are explained: The *nitya* and *naimittikakarmas* should be performed without any atttachment to the fruits there of but only with the sole purpose of *paramātmaprīti*. These two courses of discipline aim at mental concentration and their main aim is *ātmānubhūti* or self-realisation.

The next six chapters deal elaborately with *bhaktiyoga* or path of devotion which fosters a realisation of the true nature of Bhagavān who is the repositony of the six qualities of *jñāna*, *bala*, *śakti*, *vīrya*, *tejas* and *aiśvarya*.

The third *ṣaṭka* is again divided into two halves. The first deals with the three realities or *tattvatraya* and the second half deals with the performance of *nitya* and *naimittika* duties with loving devotion and without attachment to the fruits.

Commenting on v. 8 of the *Gītārthasaṅgraha*, the author states that the term *sva* refers to the Lord's incarnations as *matsya*, *kūrma*, etc., and goes on to explain that even in these avatāras His essential *svabhāva* is *asādhāraṇa* or unique i.e. it is untouched by *karma* or *prakṛti*. It is always *aprākṛta* only. Following the footsteps of Vedāntadeśika and Rāmānuja, Nārāyaṇa Muni

states that *yoga-abhyāsa* is a necessary prelude to *bhakti-yoga* discussed in the succeeding *ṣaṭka*. In v.14, the author states that the divine qualities of the Lord are mentioned again with a view to intensity the *bhakti* aspect. That *viveka*, the discrimination between the body and the soul, and the realization that the individual soul is of the form of knowledge is discussed in v. 18. i.e., *kṣetrakṣetrajñaviveka*, *aiśvarya* and *bhagavatprāpti* are explained and the author states that all the three culminate ultimately in Bhagavān only.

Verse 22 is significant since the author discusses the point of *prathamapravṛtti* or the so-called initial effort. The author explains that for all actions there are five causes: a) the physical body or the substratum, b) the individual soul who is the agent, c) the different functions of the sense-organs and e) last but not the least, the divine will which is the underlying cause because the Lord dwells as *antaryāmin* in all beings. The injunction in the *śāstras* is for individual souls alone and since the Lord has granted the body with its ensuing sense organs and free will, the *jīvas* act according to their past *karma* and having the Lord as their indweller. This is similar to moving a rock or treee by many persons, all of whom are collectively and individually the agents of that act.

In v. 23, the author stresses the need for performing one's *karma* according to one's *varṇa* and *āśrama*. The author gives his own definition of *karmayoga* thus:

कर्मयोगस्तपतीर्थदानयज्ञासुसंयमाः।
वेदाभ्यासो ज्ञानयज्ञः शमहोमार्चनानि च॥

The author enumerates the ten different types of *tapas* - *tīrtha* is visiting sacred river and holy place; *yoga* is meditation, *dāna* is *dravya yajña* and it is that act by which one gives up one's ownership right; *yajña* is *yāga* or sacrifice to the gods; *homa* is sacrifice to gods other than Brahmā and Agni; *prāṇāyāma*; *vedābhyāsa* is individual prayer or meditation; *jñānayajña* is studying the inner meaning of the *Vedas*; *śama* is control of internal and external sense organs and *arcana*, worshipping the Lord. These *aupacārika karmas* lead one to devotion and finally to *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti* which is the main teaching of the *Gītāśāstra*. Yāmuna defines *bhaktiyoga* as *Paraikāntaprītyā dhyānādiṣu sthitiḥ*. The performance of *nitya* and *naimittika* duties is stressed in all the three *yogas* and though other deities are propitiated it is the Lord who is the *antaryāmin* in all these deities, who is propitiated.

In v. 27, the author discusses *kaivalya* and says that this can be reached by all the three *yogas*. The author here refers to his own work *Gītāsārarakṣā*[1] for a detailed description of *kaivalya*. In the commentary of v. 30 the *paramaikāntin* is described in great detail by the author. The term *nyasyet* in v. 32 indicates *prapatti* and *abhīḥ* denotes freedom from fear of one's sins (*svakṛta aparādhas*).

1 p. 55.(which is not available now).

Towards the end, the author summarises the entire *Gītāśāstra* in about seven verses[1] as a sort of *maṅgaḷa* and details out the *phalaśruti* also. He gives his own commentary for these seven verses. By the phrase *iti gītārthasaṅgravibhāgaḥ* all other rival schools of thought like Advaita stand rejected.

In this prose track, the author's strict adherence to the interpretations offered by ācāryas like Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Svāmi Deśika is evident. It is written only as an elucidatory treatise to the great works of the *ācāryas*. His style is simple and each word is explained in detail. The author's comments provide interesting reading. Another significant point is that the author refers to his work other work *Gītāsārarakṣā*.

Jijñāsāsūtrabhāṣya-Bhāva Prakāśikā [2]

The author of this commentary is Nārāyaṇa Muni who in all probability, is the 14th Jīyar of Ahobila Maṭha since he has the title Śrīvatsāṅka as mentioned in the colophon.[3] This is a metrical composition interspersed with verses in *sragdharā* and *anuṣtubh* metres.

1 See pp. 64-65.

2 By Śrīvatsāṅka Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Muni (14th Jīyar), Adyar D.X. 213. Palm leaf manuscript (Grantha characters), pp. 260-262.

3 नारायणेन मुनिना श्रीवत्साङ्केन निर्मितः।

As the title *Bhāvaprakaśika* suggests, this commentary on the first *Brahmasūtra-Athāto Brahmajijñāsā* (I,i,1), explains the import of the *sūtra*. The author also refers to it as *Bhāvapradīpikā*. At the very outset, the author states that the *Karmakāṇḍa* and the *Brahmakāṇḍa* portions should be taken together as a single unitary text because the subject dealt with in both is *vedārtha* and that the fruit is also the same *viz.*, ascertainment of the import of the *Vedas* (*tannirṇayaḥ*). The import of the *Vedas* is Brahman only and the fruit is also Brahman though the *Karmakāṇḍa* and *Brahmakāṇḍa* portions may deal with different subsidiary topics. As the desired knowledge of Brahman depends on the interpretations of Vedic texts and as one who has studied the *Vedas* naturally takes to the study of the exposition of the *karma* first, therefore, an enquiry into *karma* must first be taken up. When from such an inquiry a person learns that the result of all *karma* is ephemeral and limited, while he finds that another part of the *Vedas* says that the knowledge of Brahman yields eternal and unlimited results, *viz.* liberation, a desire to know *Brahman* arises in him. So, the *nityānityaviveka* is a consequence of the complete understanding of the *Karmakāṇḍa* portion. *Adhyayana* should be the first step in this direction and *rāga* or desire to understand the import of Vedic injunctions will dawn at a latter date according to the eligibility of an individual.

The author refutes the views held by different schools of Buddhism, namely Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas who declare the identity of body and soul (*nātmā dehātiriktaḥ*) and postulate the theory of *kṣaṇikatva*. The author is of the view that there is hardly any difference between the Śūnyavādin and the Advaitin, as the latter says that *jñātṛ* and *jñeya* are all *mithyā* and the former speaks of only *śūnya*. The concept of *Nirguṇa Brahman* is refuted and according to Rāmānuja, *Nirguṇa Śrutis* are actually in conformity with the auspicious qualities of the Lord (*kalyāṇa anuguṇā eva*)[1].

निर्गुणत्वेऽपि सिद्धयेन्न सगुणध्यायिनां फलम्।
गुणानां पारमार्थ्ये वो हानिर्निर्गुणवादिनाम्॥

The author states that the *Sadviàyā* section of the *Chāndogya* establishes only *Saguṇa Brahman*.

The author uses the term *Viśiṣṭādviata* in the course of this work and defines it as *Viśiṣṭaṣya advaitam* i.e Brahman is one but qualified by attributes. Brahman has *cit* and *acit* as his body. The *muktas* also form the *prakāra* of the Lord, and as far as the eight *guṇas* are concerned there is *aikya* between *jīvas* and the Lord. The author states that three types of *advaita* are taught in the scripture-(1) between the liberated (*mukta*) and the Brahman (2) between Brahman on one hand and the *cit* and *acit* on the other, and (3) between one *jīva* and another *jīva*.

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1 Folio 2.

So, the reason for the inquiry is the unsatisfactory character of the ends promised by the *karmakāṇḍa* portion of the *mīmāṁsā*. The inquiry is for the purpose of gaining knowledge of Brahman, which is the *summum bonum* of all existence. This knowledge is not mere intellectural understanding but a devout and intense meditation on Brahman *viz. bhakti* according to Rāmānuja. When viewed in this aspect, there is *sauhārda* between the *karmakāṇḍa* and *brahmakāṇḍa* portions.

Thus in this small metrical tract, the author has attempted to establish the oneness of the *karma mīmāṁsā* and *brahma mīmāṁsās* and in the process refutes the Śūnyavādins, Advaitins and Dvaitins. The author's clarity of understanding the ideas of Rāmānuja as expounded in the *Śrībhāṣya* is evident. His ability to condense his thoughts in simple verse form is quite clearly seen in this work.

Śrīstava[1]

This is a hymn in praise of Goddess Śrī in 100 verses in *sragdharā* metre. A perusal of this hymn reveals the influence of earlier ācāryas like Yāmuna, Śrīvatsāṅka, Parāśara and Vedāntadeśika on the author, not only on the ideas expressed regarding Śrī, but also in the expressions employed.

1 By Śrī Paraṅkuśa Rāmānuja Yatīndra Mahā Deśika (24th Jīyar), pub. by Śrī Kalyāṇapuram Cakravarthi at Kumbhakoṇam in Śrī Komalamba Press, 1939 (Grantha characters).

To cite a few examples: (v. 3)

या श्रीरित्येव नाम्ना श्रुति-तदनुगुणस्मृत्युपात्ताखिलानाम्
भूतानामीश्वरी या निखिलचिदचितां जन्मरक्षादिहेतुः।
भोगाभोगौ यदीक्षाविलसितनियतौ विश्रुतौ विश्वनेतु-
र्या चावष्टब्धविश्वा जननि कथमहो वीक्ष्यसे मादृशैस्त्वम्॥

Terms like *khādyam hṛdyānavadyam* (v. 6), *nityā sīmānukampā* (v. 9), *pūrṇaṁ tejaḥ* (v. 16) *nityāmoda* (v. 20) are reminiscent of the terms used by Vedāntadeśika in his *Śrīstuti*.

For the author, Śrī is the consort of Lord Nṛsiṁha the presiding deity of Ahobilam, *yatsthānāṅko nṛsiṁhaḥ* (v. 1). She is *nṛhareḥ praṇayinī* (vv. 8, 11, 17), *śrīmannṛsiṁhapraguṇabhagavatī* (v. 10), *nṛhareḥ vallabhā* (v. 62). She has *aprākṛtadehā* (divine body) like the Lord Himself (v. 29). In v. 7 the author prays that his art of poesy be blessed by Śrī's benevolent glances.

The idea of Śrīvatsāṅka in his *Śrīstava*, that when a dog drinks the water of the Ganges, its innate purity is not lost, is echoed in v. 11:

हन्त श्वा किं तृषार्तः त्रपत उत बिभेत्यालिहन्नेव सिन्धुम्।

In v. 14, the coronation (*paṭṭābhiṣeka*) of Śrī is described on the lines of Vedāntadeśika. Verse 22 describes etymologically the function of Śrī: *Śriṇāti, Śṛṇāti, Śṛṇoti, Śrāvayati, Śrayate* and *Śrīyate*. Verse 35 states that according to one's *karma*, one attains the body of god, man, animal or plant. As the author proceeds, he addresses Śrī as Maithilī on the lines of Parāśara

Bhaṭṭa in his *Śrīguṇaratnakośa* (v. 41). He enumerates the qualities of Śrī in v. 48.

ज्ञानं शक्तिर्बलं ते जननि मम कृते ज्योतिरैश्वर्यवीर्ये
प्राथम्येन प्रतीता महितबहुगुणास्तद्विशेषाश्च सर्वे।
वात्सल्यौदार्यवीर्ये म्रदिमसुलभताप्रेमसौशील्यदान्ति-
क्षान्तिस्वादुत्वशान्त्यार्जवमधुरकृतज्ञत्वसम्पूर्णताद्याः॥

In v. 36, the author states that Śrī makes Nṛhari forget the sins of His devotees – *doṣān vismārayitrī*. In v. 49 the author performs *prapatti* to Śrī on the lines of Yāmuna. In v. 50, the author states that it is Śrī's duty to pacify the Lord – *doṣān sarvānetānapohya*.

In v. 51 the author does *prapatti* at Lord's and Śrī's feet –

देवि श्रीरम्ब लक्ष्मीनृसिंहचरणयोरर्प्यमाणोऽहमार्यै-
रुद्देशाभ्यां पितृभ्यामनवधिकृपया रक्षणीयः कटाक्षैः।

thus stressing the unity of the Godhead. In v. 64 the author states that this *līlāvibhūti* subject to creation, maintenance and destruction, is a game of dice for the divine couple:

प्रियतमभगवत्खेलनं द्यूतमेतत्।

In v. 65, the author states that the difference in status of lives of people are due to Śrī's benevolent glances:

श्रीमद्भिस्ते कटाक्षैर्नरहरिदयिते तारतम्यादुपेतैः

on the lines of Śrīvatsāṅka's *Śrīstava* (v.9): *loke vanaspatibṛhaspatitāratamyam* ...

Śrī is quick to grant boons (v. 80): *Kṣipraprasādinī*. In v. 84, the author speaks of his own lack of devotion to Lord Nṛsiṁha, to his own *guru* and his incapacity to grasp the meaning of the *mantras*. Only through Śrī's grace his doubts are cleared: *vītaśaṅkā-kalaṅkaḥ*. Then he declares that Śrī is capable of granting learning (*vidyā*) and not merely prosperity (*aiśvarya*). The author speaks of his own total incapability and his own worthlessness to receive Her Grace and yet he prays to Her (v. 29).

भूयो भूयः पुनस्ते निखिलभुवनसम्राज्ञि विज्ञापयामि
स्वीयोऽनन्यो शरण्यो गतिरतिकृपणोऽकिञ्चनोऽतीव मुग्धः।
दुष्टो शिष्टप्रविष्टस्वचरणमहितो भीत एषोऽतिमात्रम्
त्वेतन्मात्रो हि पात्रं जननि निरवधेस्सर्वदाया दयायाः॥

In v. 95, the author delineates Śrī as being served by Pārvatī, which indicates Her supreme status:

त्वामासीनां सुधर्मोपरि हिमधरणीभृत्सुता धातृपत्नी।

Verse 96 is significant in that the author describes Śrī as the support of the whole universe - *sarvalokādhāratva*, and the whole universe is Her body - *etannikhilamapi jagatte śarīram*. She is also *upādānakāraṇa* like Her Lord, and she is free from all demerits. If that is the case, can the quality of *aṇutva* be associated with Goddess Śrī? It is a poignant question and shows that the author disagrees with the Teṅkalai view that Śrī is not *vibhu* (all-pervasive). Again in v. 97, he performs total surrender to the Lord and Śrī.

शृण्वन् जिघ्रन्विपश्यन् जननि किमपि वा संस्पृशन्वा स्वदन्वा
गच्छन् गृह्णन् वदन् वाप्यहमिह निमिषन्नुन्मिषन्वा नमस्यन्।
प्राणन् ध्यायंस्तुवन्वा प्रणयिनि नृहरेः यत्कृपाधीनवृत्ति-
स्तं च त्वां त्वत्पतिं चानुपधि परिचरन् सर्वतस्स्यां कृतार्थः॥

In v. 98 the author prays that his composition should be accepted by Śrī:

पद्मे पूर्णैः कटाक्षैः कुसुमफलवती संहितैषा स्तुतिस्ते
कामानां कल्पवल्ली प्रभवतु कमले श्रेयसे भूयसे नः॥

Finally the author mentions the *phalaśruti* and states that those who study this composition of Parakuśa Muni with devotion, will be blessed by the Consort of Nṛhari.

The style of the author is lucid and makes for easy reading and comprehension. He follows faithfully the ideas of his *pūrvācāryas* in his elucidation of the concept of Śrī.

Śrī-pañcāśat

This work by the same author is again a hymn of 51 vv. in *sragdharā* on Goddess Śrī. The author here exhibits his poetic skill in the use of *śabdālaṅkāras* like alliteration and *yamaka*. The beauty of maintaining *prāsa* is to be appreciated.

The author begins with the consontant *ka* in *prāsasthāna* (second letter) from the first line of the first verse.

साकारोकारटीकाप्रकटितविभवां ...
स्वीकाराकारमेकां ...
स्वाकाराकारिणं कामपि ...
पाका मूका वराका ...

The consonants *ka* to *kṣa* have been chosen as the second letter in each line of the verses, right upto v. 51:

लक्ष्मीरक्षय्यलक्ष्मीरवतु ...
लक्ष्मीभूताक्षरेक्षो ...
पक्ष्मीभावक्षमेक्षां ...
सूक्ष्मीभूताक्षरादि ...

In the v. 11, *yamaka* is used effectively.

स्वच्छ स्वच्छायया चासि ...

Svaccha is first used as meaning pure and *svaccha* in the sense of complexion (in *svacchāyayā*) is used next. In v. 12, the author enumerates some of Śrī's important qualities like compassion (*dayā*), patience (*kṣānti*) and parental affection (*vātsalya*) and states that Śrī rejuvenates the entire creation by her qualities.

तैर्जीवाजीवपुञ्जैर्जगदवसि दयाक्षान्तिवात्सल्यमुख्यैः।

In v. 25, the author pleads to Śrī to save him who is totally helpless and who has surrendered at Her feet.

सत्यासत्या नियत्या कृपणमपि जडं मूढवृत्या प्रपत्त्या
वत्या सत्या महत्या स्वकमव कृपया वत्सला मां प्रपत्त्या॥

The same idea is echoed in v. 33. She is the consort of Nṛsiṁha (*nṛhari sahacarī*) (v. 36) and the author stresses the unity of Godhead in (*Bhagavati Nṛharau*) in v. 43. She is the most beloved of Nṛhari (*nṛhareḥ jyāyasī preyasī śrīḥ*) and She has taken a vow to protect the universe in v. 51 (*jagatkṣemarakṣaikadīkṣā*). The last is the *phalaśruti* that ensues when this *pañcāśat* is read with devotion.

लक्ष्मीरक्षाय्यलक्ष्मीरवतु सरसिजाक्षाधिवक्षास्सुरक्षा
लक्ष्मीभूताक्षरेक्षोक्षितरमणजगत्क्षेमरक्षैकदीक्षा।
पक्ष्मीभावक्षमेक्षाक्षणसरसगुणाध्यक्षमायाक्षरेक्षा
सूक्ष्मीभूताक्षरादिक्षर हृदि पतिवीक्षासपक्षात्मवीक्षा॥

From the above available two works of His Holiness the 24th Jīyar, we can appreciate the Svāmī's clarity of thought, his understanding of the *granthas* of Śrīvaiṣṇava preceptors, and his ability to adopt their ideas and convey them in his own style. The second work, also in praise of Śrī is not redundant but actually complements the former. At the same time, we are able to gauge the author's poetic skill and his command over the Sanskrit vocabulary and language. These two hymns make easy reading and can be memorised through repeated study.

Vaikuṇṭhavijaya-campū[1]

The *Vaikuṇṭhavijaya-campū* is a travelogue that details the visit of two imaginary characters Jaya and Vijaya in their aerial path to the temples of Śrīraṅgam, Mysore, Yadugiri, Ayodhyā, Kāśī and Dvārakā. The dialogue between Jaya and Vijaya is significant as it indicates the supremacy of Lord Viṣṇu over Lord Śiva, the necessity of an Ācārya for liberation and highlights the selfless devotion of the ācāryas for the propagation of Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy among the masses. The Campū is a form of literature that is interpersed with prose and poetry:-

गद्यपद्यमयं काव्यं चम्पूरित्यभिधीयते।

Here, the author employs terse prose (on the lines of Vedāntadeśika's *Raghuvīragadya*) and simple verse form. It is *sarasacārugadyapadyamiśraṇa*, according to the editor, K.E. Govindan. The author begins the work with a benedictory verse addressed to Śrī Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa and then to Śrī Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha, Śrīkṛṣṇa, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Lakṣmī and then pays his obeisance to the lineage of his family and ācāryas. He mentions these in separate *ślokas*[2] starting from Nāthamuni, Rāmānuja, Nigamānta Mahādeśika, Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa, Nārāyaṇa Yati, Śrīnivāsa Yati, and Raṅganātha Yati. He salutes

1 By Śrī Vīrarāghava Vedānta Yatīndra Mahādeśika (27th Jīyar), Ganganath Jha Kendriya Samskrita Vidyapitha Granthamala, No:22, ed. K.E. Govindan, pub. by Rastriya Samskrit Sansthanam, New Delhi,1987.

2 *Vaikuṇṭhavijaya-campū*, p. 4.

his great-grandfather Śrīnivāsācārya, grandfather Veṅkaṭācārya and father Śrīnivāsācārya. The author is the disciple of Raṅganāthasvāmī and studied religious works under Śrīnivāsasvāmī. The author takes pride in saying that he was a great scholar in literature (*sāhitya*) and philosophy (*darśana*) and is also well-versed in poetic literature.

काव्यालङ्कारवृत्तेष्वपि च परिचयात्[1]

He declares that his own poetic achievements are the result of his study of the works of earlier Śrīvaiṣṇava ācāryas like Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, and Deśika. In true humility he says that some people may censure his work, but the world is not small and his work will have its own appeal.[2] Two characters Jaya and Vijaya are introduced who after visiting the three worlds are interested to travel to the earth. Hence they set out on their mission. Jaya is a devotee of Lord Śiva whereas Vijaya is a *viṣṇubhakta*. Hence their dialogue is significant and interesting. Vijaya speaks of the greatness of the Lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu and waxes eloquent about the supremacy of Lord Viṣṇu and his immerable auspicious qualities in 13 verses.[3] To Jāya's query as to why he does not propitiate Śiva, Vijaya replies that Śiva, Brahmā and Indra carry out their duties only as ordained by Lord Viṣṇu.[4] So he asks Jaya to cast off his

1 *Vaikuṇṭhavijaya-campū*, v.18, p.5.

2 Ibid. v.14, p.6.

3 *Bhagavadāpādacūḍābhivandana* similar to Vedātadeśika's *Bhagavad-dhyānasopānam*.

4 *Vaikuṇṭhavijaya-campū*,v. 51, p.17.

veil of ignorance and leave off the study of the *purāṇas* dealing with *tāmasic* qualities. He eulogises the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, *Śrī Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa* and asks him to develop devotion to Lord Hari as that alone will dispel fear of death –

हरन्ती पापौघानथ परिहरन्ती यमभयम्।[1]

Vijaya again goes into rhapsodies when he speaks of the blissful qualities of Lord Hari in *Hariguṇānandalaharī* in 10 verses. He is not satisfied with this and again bursts out in his *Vedāntapādastava* in another 10 verses in which the last foot of each verse incorporates a Vedic statement. For instance, to quote the very first verse:[2]

आनन्दपूर्णं पतिमिन्दिरायाः भक्तोत्तमर्णं भुवनाभिगुप्त्यै।
स्वतोऽवतीर्णं दयया भजेयं आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्॥

Turning the aerial chariot towards Śrīraṅgam, he pays his obeisance to Lord Raṅganātha and gives a graphic description of the town in 3 verses resounding in alliterations.

रङ्गं भवभङ्गं भज तुङ्गं तरुबृन्दैः स्फीतं भुवि भातं नमदातङ्कनिहन्तृ।
श्रीमद् गतभीमत्सरधीमज्जनसेव्यं सेवाधिकभावागतदेवावलिसान्द्रम्॥

Here Jaya intervenes and in eight verses casts aspersions on Śrīvaiṣṇava ascetics who pretend to be *saṁnyāsins* (v. 101 *vairāgyam*

1 *Vaikuṇṭhavijaya-campū*, v. 79, p.17.

2 Ibid. v. 88, p. 19.

bhāvayantaḥ), but are really attached to worldly dersires (v. 106 *baddha spṛhāḥ*). To this Vijaya, praises the Śrīvaiṣṇava ascetics in two verses and goes a step further to extol the Ācāryapuruṣas:

आचार्यपुरुषा एते महावंशसमुद्भवाः।
शिष्यैर्दत्तेन वित्तेन वित्तेशमवमन्वते॥[1]

These preceptors are munificient and with the wealth acquired through acts of charity, they look after the welfare of their devotees. Vijaya states that there may be defects in an Ācārya, but their unique good qualities overshadow any defect.

दोषाः सन्तु सहस्रशोऽप्यतितरामेषां विशेषान् गुणान्
दोषापाकृतिदीक्षितान् शृणुतरां लब्धावधानः सखे।

He goes on to elucidate the story of the sinful Kṣatrabandhu and the virtuous Puṇḍarīkākṣa, both of whom attained liberation only through the grace of an Ācārya (v. 122). The *guru* is the *Parabrahman* and he is the ultimate goal (*parā gatiḥ*) (v. 124). The greatness of *bhakti* is highlighted and this devotion to Lord Hari finally grants liberation (v. 127). He defends the use of Tamil *Divyaprabandhams* (*Dramiḍasaṁhitā*) in temples. Tamil was a great language revered by Agastya (*Kumbhīsambhavanāmaka* v. 130), and Nammāḻvār used it to perfection in his *Prabandham*.

1 p. 23, v. 111.

As they survey Śrīraṅgam, they admire the devotion of the Bhāgavatās who, as they pay their obeisance to the Lord, fall flatly on the ground - *sāṣṭāṅga-namaskāra.* Then follows the description of Candrapuṣkariṇī tank and here *śleṣa alaṅkāra* is employed by the author.[1]

Then diverting the aerial chariot, they bow down and pay their respects to Lord Raṅganātha in 12 verses. Jaya extols the Lord as the fragrance of fragrances, the essence of all essences and the final abode of all as desires described in the *Śrutis.*

स सर्वकामः किल सर्वगन्धो विभात्यहो! सर्वरसो रसात्मा ॥ (v. 147)

Vijaya goes on to describe Śrī Raṅganāyikā, who is the consort (*aṅganā*) of Lord Raṅganātha. Jaya intervenes and wants to know why Śrī who is fickle-minded (*capalābhikhyā*) is propitiated. In reply to this Vijaya speaks out the excellence of Śrī in six verses. She is the dispeller of the sins of the universe (*viśvapāpaughamoṣā*) and *viṣṇuśuddhāntayoṣā* and is the granter of all wishes. Then, they pray to Garutmān, the holy vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu.

The description of Garuḍa in 13 verses that follow is on the lines of Vedāntadeśika's *Garuḍapañcāśat.* Then follows the description of *Daśāvatārasannidhi* which grants liberation (*vimuktipradam*). The ten

1 *Vaikuṇṭhavijayacampū*, pp. 28,29.

incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu are described on the lines of the *Daśāvatāra Śtotra* of Vedāntadeśika and the author states that these forms were incarnated by the Lord only for the redemption of mankind. The description of river Kāverī follows wherein the sound of waters is echoed in the words used to describe it. *phulladhallakatallajollalalanavat* (v. 162). Then they proceed to Śirocala and Mahīśūrapura (modern Mysore).[1] Reference is made to King Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya,[2] the glory and prosperity of his kingdom and the respect the king had for Śrīvaiṣṇavas - *tārāgaṇavat viṣṇupadasamśrayaśālibih meghairiva vidyutbhāsitaiḥ dvārakāvāsibhirivakṛṣṇarājadayotkarṣaśobhanaiḥ.*

The Yadugiri mountain in Melkote is sighted later; then homage is paid to Śrī Rāmānuja referred to as *Yadugirisekhara*, whose favourite haunt was this hillock. Reference is made to his *Śrībhāṣya* and the profound scholarship with which he defeated rival schools of thought, with the commentaries of *Taṅka, Dramiḍa, Guhadeva*[3] and he was well known by the term *Śrībhāṣyakāra.* Thousands of devotees entered into his fold and he allowed the entry of *mlecchas*[4] into the temple of Lord Tirunārāyaṇa who is

1 *Vaikuṇṭhavijayacampū*, p. 44.
2 Ibid. p. 46.
3 Ibid. p. 51.
4 Ibid. p. 57.

described as *yadugiriśikharaśekhara.*[1] In this description, the author displays his mastery of Sanskrit vocabulary and the ease with which he is able to play on words using *yamaka* and *anuprāsa alaṅkāras.*

Then, Vijaya turns to Kalyāṇī Puṣkaraṇī and pays his obeisance to the holy tank in v. 106. Jaya intervenes and questions as to how a person who worships the tank called Kalyāṇī will achieve all auscipiousness. To this query, Vijaya on the lines of the poet Veṅkatādvarin[2] takes recourse to *tatkratunyāya*[3] and states in v. 211 thus:

कल्याणीभजनात् मर्त्यः कल्याणी भवति ध्रुवम्।
तत्क्रतुन्याययाथात्म्यम् अत्रैव प्रकटीकृतम्॥

In another ten *ślokas*, Vijaya again eulogises Yadugiri and he concludes in v. 221 with *Nārāyaṇa stuti.*

The aerial chariot then takes a different route and proceeds to Sahyādri, which is described to be the abode of rare and fragrant herbs and trees (v .222) capable of rejuvenating human life and hence the mountain is always flocked by practitioners of Siddha medicine (v. 223), delighted by the fragrance of sandal wood and the beautiful foliage all around.

1 Reference is also made to the 74 *simhāsanādhipatis* nominated by Śrī Rāmānuja.

2 Author of the *Viśvaguṇādarśa campū.*

3 The relevant text of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III, 14, 1) is **यथाक्रतुरस्मिन् लोके पुरुषो भवति तथेतः प्रेत्य भवति।**

The sight of Ayodhyā towards the North, sends Vijaya into raptures and he declares that this town has gained in sanctity because Lord Rāma ruled over it (v. 229) and He is verily Lord Nārāyaṇa, Śrīpatiḥ who has the whole world as His body (v. 234). Then Jaya intervenes to enquire whether Rāma was an incarnation of Śiva (v. 235). Vijaya speaks of the greatness of the Epic Rāmāyaṇa in (v. 236) and points out that Rāma should not be taken to mean Śiva, because the very terms *Viṣṇu* and *Nārāyaṇa* are used in relation to Rāma at the beginning, middle and end of the Epic; and by applying the rule of *upakrama* and *upasaṁhāra* in *tātparyanirṇaya*, these names are synonymous and mean only Lord Nārāyaṇa.

In the following five verses he speaks of the glory of Rāmāvatāra and refers to the story wherein Śiva was petrified through the *huṅkāra* of Lord Viṣṇu (v. 241). Reference is also made to Lord's Śiva's reply[1] to Pārvatī who wanted to know the easy way to recite the thousand names of Lord Viṣṇu:

केनोपायेन विष्णोरपि खलु लघुना नामसाहस्रपाठो
मर्त्यानां बोभवीति प्रिय वद तदिति प्रब्रुवन्त्यामुमायाम्।
तत्तुल्यं रामनामग्रहणमिति हरस्योक्तिरेषा धुनीते
त्वच्छङ्कामङ्ग तस्मात् रघुपतिरनघो विष्णुपूर्णावतारः॥ (v. 244)

Vijaya glorifies the potency of reciting the *Rāmanāma* (v. 247) with beautiful alliteration. In a string of 8 verses (*Rāmāṣṭakam*) the author with his mastery of the Sankrit vocabulary extols the greatness of *Kosalendra Rāma.*

1 *Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasranāma.* v.134.

He is the supporter of the universe (*dhātā lokasya*) always the winner in battles (v. 248 *jetā raṇabhuvi*) and he is the source of innuverble auscipious qualities. The *phalaśruti* for reciting the *Rāmāṣṭakam* is also stated. It confers always auspiciousness and long life and removes the greatest of sins. Jaya is puzzled as to how Lord Rāmā is thus praised, though he was the cause of destruction of innumerable rākṣasas. Vijaya brushes aside this query and says that the wicked should be punished at all costs and Lord Rāmā is the destroyer of enemies (*virāmāḥ śatrūṇām*). Reference is made to the term *śaraṇāgati* as *bharanyāsa* (v. 255) when Sugrīva resorted to Lord Rāmā's feet seeking for protection from Vāli's attack.

From Ayodhyā they proceed northwards and the River Gaṅgā is described in all its splendour in 10 verses. The sanctifying powers of the river is highlighted and it is mentioned that Lord Śiva's greatness is enhanced because of his association with this river

ब्रह्मेन्द्रादेर्गरीयान् भवति पशुपतिः सर्वविद्वत्समीड्यः।
नूनं त्वत्स्पर्शमात्रात् ... (v. 269.)

In v. 271, the author states that those who resort to the Lord for freedom from *bhavabhāva* (worldly existence) attain *Bhavabhāva* (become Śiva). This is an example of *virodhābhāsa alaṅkāra.*

भवभावमम्ब परिहर्तुमादरात् भवतीमुपेत्य भवभावमिच्छति।

The holy city of Kāśi is described in 4 verses. When Jaya enquires that it is Lord Śiva's abode (*śiva kṣetram iyam kāśī*) Vijaya categorically states that it is because of the intense associations of Lord Viṣṇu with this place that it is the cause of liberation and it is in this vey place that Lord Śiva was conferred boons by Lord Rāma. In the *phalaśruti* it is stated that this *Upaniṣadic* secret meaning when heard by people, will purify them through the grace of Lord Rāmabhadra.

The holy city of Dvārakā is described next, in 4 verses. They pay their obeisance to Lord Kṛṣṇa (Dvārakāpurīśa):

कृष्णाकृतेः भगवतः चरणारविन्दं
वृष्णा शिवेन विधिनापि समर्च्यमानम्।
तृष्णापहं जनिपथश्रमिणां नराणां
मुष्णातु मामकममुं हृदयान्धकारम्॥ (v. 280)

With this Jaya and Vijaya return to their heavenly abode. The colophon of the text states that the author Vātsya Vīrarāghava has written this *Vaikuṇṭhavijayacampū* which is a precious gem among *campūs* to please Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha.

It is stated in the preface to this book that this *campū* is modelled on the lines of *Viśvaguṇādarśacampū* by Veṅkaṭādhvarin and many points of similarity are brought out. Similarity with Vedāntadeśika's *Daśāvatara stotra* and *Raghuvīragadya* is also discernible. The author's scholarship and literary and poetic skill in the use of *yamaka* and *anuprāsa* is seen throughout the

work. Later ācāryas[1] opine that this work is a fitting reply to Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita's *Nīlakaṇṭha Vijaya Campū*. The supremacy of Lord Viṣṇu, the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita wherein the whole universe forms the body of the Lord, the efficacy of *śaraṇāgati*, the necessity of performing *kaiṅkarya* and loving devotion to the Lord and His devotees, the greatness of ācāryas and their duties as also those of pontifical heads are all presented through this medium of *campū* with its beautiful admixture of terse prose and simple verse form. To a student of literature, the graphic descriptions of many holy places of worship are a source of sustaining interest. Poetry and prose, religion and philosophy are all brought together in an enjoyable confluence in this work.

Adhikaraṇakalpataru*[2] *or
Padayojanā

The *Padayojanā* is an explanatory treatise on Śrī Vedāntadeśika *Adikaraṇasārāvali*. The author has taken into consideration the commentary *Cintāmaṇi* of Śrī Kumāra Varadācārya on *Adhikaraṇasārāvali*; but feels that this was not an exhaustive explanation. So, the *Padayojanā* has been written to elucidate the meanings so that even a layman who is interested to know about the *adhyātma śāstra*, will be able to grasp its import. The title

1 Preface to *Viśiṣṭādvaitakośa*, p. 15.

2 By Śrī Śaṭhakopa Rāmānuja Yatīndra (34th Jīyar),Vedāntadeśika's *Adhikaraṇasārāvaḷi*, pub. by Kurucci Lakṣminṛsimhācārya, Ahobila Maṭha, Śrīraṅgam, 1940.

Padayojanā is quite fitting in the sense that each *pada* has been clearly explained with the *padaccheda*, *padārthokti* and *padaśo'rthaprakāśana*.

In the invocatory verse, the author pays homage to the Lord of Ahobilam and then to his *ācārya* and then to Vedāntadeśika and his son Kumāra Varadācārya. He calls himself Ramāvāsarāghavācārya as his *pūrvāśrama* name was Śrīnivāsa Rāghavācārya Svāmī.

In the preface the 41st Jīyar (under whose auspices this book was published) opines that the two commentaries *Cintāmaṇi* and *Padayojanā* should be read along with Vedānta deśika's *Adhikaraṇasārāvali* as they form the conch (*saṅkha*) and discus (*cakra*) of Deśika's poetic piece that is Brahman.[1] The preface is significant in that it includes a brief sketch of Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa's life as also that of the author of *Padayojanā* (Attipaṭṭu Jīyar as he was popularly called), the basic texts of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy and a list of the works of the Jīyar.

Explaining the first word *svasti* of the benedictory verse of the *Adhikaraṇaśārāvali*, the author states that it is *āśīḥ kṣemaṅkara śāsanaviśeṣam* and quotes the lexicon - *āśīḥ kṣemapuṇyādau*. For the term

1 p. xv of the preface.
सारावलीब्रह्मणः सुदर्शनपाञ्चजन्यवत्।
इदमुभयमपि धार्यमाचार्यवद्भिः॥

śaśvat (which was not explained by *Kumāra Varadācārya*) our author explains - *punaḥ punaḥ, triṁśadvāram śrāvitaśārīrakabhāṣyaḥ ityādyukta-rītyā bahuvāramityarthaḥ.* An interesting explanation is offered for the term *sragdharā-dugdharāśiḥ* i.e. *divya gavya navya dugdhadhārā paramparā.* The *sragdharā* metre employed is a continous stream of fresh milk from the divine cow Kāmadhenu.

As far as the explanation of the verses dealing with *Jijñāsādhikaraṇa* is concerned, since the *Ciñtāmaṇi* is quite elucidative our author confines himself to explaining it in the barest terms without being redundant.

The discussion on the *parāyattādhikaraṇa* affords interesting reading. There are two types of *kartṛtva*[1] - *prayojaka* and *prayojya.* For the Lord, *śaraṇāgati* is only a mere pretext (*vyājamātra*) and this according to the author may be even a simple act of folding hands (*anjalyādyalpa-vyājam*). Only the Lord who rules from within as the *antaryāmin* of all has *sarvaprayojakakartṛtva.* But since the *jīva* has received the power of discrimination from the Lord, he has *prayojyakartṛtva,* but there is no contradiction between the two. In the *Cintāmaṇi* it is stated that at all times and places the Lord is the motivating factor, but He does this according to one's past *karma.* Hence there is no room for any partiality (*vaiṣamya*) or

1 See *Adhikaraṇasārāvali,* pp. 387, 388, 389.

cruelty (*nairghṛṇya*) on the part of the Lord toward the *jīvas*. In the *Padayojanā* our author declares that the Lord is the witness of the whole universe (*sarvalokasākṣī*) with its beginningless stream of *karma* and hence the question of original *pravṛtti* does not arise (*mūlakāraṇa praśnasya nāvakāśaḥ*). Towards the end, the author pays his homage to his *ācārya* and says that he has written this treatise on the lines of *Cintāmaṇi* (*cintāmaṇim anubhāvya*).

This is a fairly popular work among the present day scholars. The author supplements and complements the *Cintāmaṇi* of Śrī Kumāra Varadācārya. The original ideas of Vedāntadeśika are brought out clearly without any ambiguity.

Vādataraṅgiṇī and Other Works [1]

This book which is taken up for study, contains the biographical details of the Jīyar rendered in English in about eleven pages followed by its Tamil version which was published earlier in the *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Priyā* monthly journal. In pages X and XI, a list of twentysix known works of the Jīyar is given. Of these, only thirteen are available and published in this edition.

1 By Pillaipākkam Śrī Vīrarāghava Śaṭhakopa (37th Jīyar), Ed. V. Śrīvatsankacharya. pub. by P.N. Krishnaswamy and P.N. Parthasarathi, Madras 1984.

Another work, *Tatkratunyāyasāra*[1] is available in Manuscript form. This is also taken up for study, in the following pages.

The works studied here are (1) *Śrutigītā Vyākhyā* (2) *Śārīraka Suprabhātam* (3) *Vādataraṅgiṇī* (4) *Tārārthasāra* (5) *Tārārtha-prabhā* (6) *Tatkratunyāyasāra* (7) *Sthuṇā-liṅganirṇaya* (8) *Nyāyasiddhāñjana-kārikā-vimarśanam* (9) *Ādeśamaṇi* (10) *Ādeśamaṇi vyākhyā kaustubha* (11) *Dāsadāsīsamarthanī* (12) *Makārarakṣā* and (13) *Sthemadarpaṇa.*

According to the editor (p.34) there are still 15 works of the Jīyar which are not available now. They are:- (1) *Argalapañcakam* (2) *Ācārya saptati* on his own *guru* Paruttipaṭṭu Aḷagiya- siṅgar (3) *Śrī Ādi Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Vaibhava Candrikā* (4) *Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭhakopa Yatīndra Mahādeśikastava* (5) *Āṣāḍhyupākarma-abhyanujñā* (6) *Gomālā* (7) *Goṣṭhīnāthastava* (8) *Yaṇ-prakāśa* (9) *Yaṇ-prakāśa Vyākhyāna* (10) *Yatirājabhoga* (11) *Vedāntakaustubhasāra* (12) *Vedāntadeśikastavamālikā* (13) *Raṇapuṅgavastava* (14) *Śrībhāṣyakāra suprabhātam* (15) A few *muktaka ślokas.*

1 Adyar D. X. 223.

It is a commentary on the 51 verses forming what is called the *Śrutigītā* in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, Skandha 10, Chapter 87. This is also known as *Vedastuti* or *Śrīstuti*. The *mūlaśloka* is given first accompanied by a word for word meaning and relevant explanations in prose followed by the author's *śloka* that sums up the meaning.

For instance, when explaining *śloka* 36 (p.41) the author states that the Ācārya is the very incarnation of the Lord and explains the word *purupuṇya* used in it.

Ācārya-avatara-lakṣaṇa is actually *Ācārya-āśrama-viśeṣaṇa-parigrahanimittam*. In the ensuing *śloka*, the Lord is addressed as Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha (p.42):

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह तव पादसरोजचित्ताः
पापापहाङ्घ्रिसलिला विमदा महान्तः।
न्यस्यन्ति ये सकृदिह त्वयि मोक्षकाङ्क्षा-
स्ते तीर्थतां दधति गेहसुखत्यजश्च॥ (22)

Towards the end of the commentary, the author states that he had written this work at the behest of the scholars (*budhavara*) of Tiruvallūr who were interested to know the Vedic truths contained in the *Śruti Gītā*.

Śārīraka Suprabhātam

This is a hymn in 32 verses addressed to Lord Devarāja of Kāñcī who is conceived to be (i) reclining on the milky ocean of the wise sayings of teachers like Rāmānuja, and (ii) the Vedic passages explained in the various *Adhikaraṇas* of the *Brahma-sūtras*. On the lines of Vedāntadeśika's *Adhikaraṇasārāvali*, the author employs the *sragdharā* metre and awakens the Lord of Kāñcī.

श्रीरामानुजसूक्तिदुग्धजलधेरुत्तिष्ठ! सुष्ठूदितम् । (1)

In v. 20, the author states that the *paramapuruṣa* is the indweller (*antaryāmin*) of the whole universe –

तिष्ठत्यङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषः इह तथाऽङ्गुष्ठमात्रोऽन्तरात्मा
लोकानां सन्निविष्टो हृदय इह सदा भूतभव्येशितेति ॥ (v.20)[1]

Towards the concluding part of the work the author mentions the year and month in which he composed this *stotra* –

उद्बुद्ध्वा वीराघ्वीश्वरशठरिपुणा भिक्षुणा हेमलम्बि-
न्यब्देऽस्मिन् चापमासे दिनगणगणिताः स्रग्धराः सर्वधार्याः ॥ (v. 31)[2]

Vādataraṅgiṇi

This is a work of grammatical interest in which the author justifies the use of feminine gender in expressions like *bhavatīpādalākṣārasāṅkam*

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1 p. 59.

2 p. 61.

(Vedāntadeśika's *Śrīstuti*, 4) and *bhavatī- bhāgadheyena jīvan* (Vedāntadeśika's *Haṁsasandeśa*, II, 31) where apparently according to Kātyāyana's *Vārtika* (V, 3, 28) *sarvanāmno vṛttimātre puṁvadbhāvaḥ*, the masculine gender has to be used. So, the first example should read as *bhavatpādalākṣā* etc. As the title suggests, the author advances the arguments and counter arguments in the forms of waves, and concludes that this rule does not apply to the term *bhavatī*. This work is also mentioned and discussed in another work titled *Śiṣṭaprayoga-samīkṣā*.[1] The author concludes with his salutations to his *guru* who had blessed him with the philosophical knowledge–

इत्थं पुंस्त्वं ह्वानः सभिकसभसदामोदितस्वादुवादो
योऽदाद् वेदान्तविद्यागुरुहृदयसमुल्लासिधीलासिकां मे ॥[2]

***Tārārtha Sāra* and its commentary *prabhā*; *Tatkratunyāyasāra*:**[3]

The *Tārārtha Sāra* is in eight verses and aims to explain the usage of the term *eva* (एव) in the *Śruti* text –

तं यथा उपासते तथैव भवति ।[4]

1 See editor's note, p. 17.

2 p. 109.

3 Not included in the above text, but available in Manuscript in Adyar D. X. 223.

4 *Mudgala*. p. 3.

The author states that the term should be taken to mean *ayogavyavaccheda* and not *anyayogavyavaccheda*. This seems to have been a much debated point in scholarly circles during the author's time. Scholars like Śrī Kṛṣṇa Tātārya Svāmī (better known as Tiruppuṭkuḻi Svāmī), Śrī Kapisthalam Deśikācārya and Śrīraṅgam Śrīmad Āṇḍavan Svāmī seem to have concurred with the author in this regard; but some of his Tennācārya colleagues disagreed with this viewpoint. Hence the author penned the work *Tatkratunyāyasāra*, which is an epilogue to his *Tārārthasāra* and *Prabhā*.

The *Tatkratunyāyasāra* is a metrical composition in fifty verses in *sragdharā* metre similar to the *Adhikaraṇasārāvali* of Vedāntadeśika. The style, however, is not as simple as Deśika's. In this later work, the author sets at rest the opinion of his scholarly colleague who feels that Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya*, *śarīre bhāvādhikaraṇa* (III. 3, 52), meant only the *upāsyaguṇa*.[1] But Vedāntadeśika states in his *Rahasyatrayasāra*[2] that *evakāra* should be taken to mean the *upāsita-guṇas* viz. *apahatapāpmā*, *vijara*, *vimṛtyu*, *viśoka*, *vijighatsa*, *apipāsa*, *satyakāma* and *satyasaṅkalpa*. The *Chāndogya* text (III,14,7) reads as follows:

यथाक्रतुरस्मिन् लोके पुरुषो भवति तथेतः प्रेत्य भवति।

1 See *Śrībhāṣya*. vol. II. p. 523– तस्मात् प्रत्यगात्मा प्राप्याकार एव अनुसन्धेयः।

2 See p. 153.

The *pratyagātmā* is *upāsyabhūta parabrahma śarīra* and hence the qualities that are meditated upon will be acquired later, but not to the exclusion of the other qualities that are natural to the *jīva*.

उपासितगुणादेर्या प्राप्तावप्यबहिष्क्रिया।
सा तत्कृतुनयग्राह्या नाकारान्तरवर्जनम्॥[1]

The author refers to his work *Tārārthasāra* in vv. 2, 17, 30, 46 and 50. The following *śloka* v. 11 elucidates the author's stand :

सूत्रे नञ्पर्युदस्तात् कृतुनयबलतोऽपि ह्युदस्तान् बभाषे
तत्सिद्धिः तत्कृतूक्तेरितरनिरसनार्थत्यपादात्र साध्या।
उक्ता योगव्युदासे प्रकृतिरहितचिन्मात्रमुख्यत्वभाजे
प्राप्तौ ब्रह्मानवाप्यं कृतुनयनियमाच्चिद्विशेष्यत्वभङ्गात्॥
...
एवं श्रुत्या तु या या फलति परमतिः सापरोपास्त्यनूना-
कारैवेत्यर्थसिद्धिः क्वचिदसति परोपासने न्यूनता का॥ (12)

Hence only the *śuddharūpāṣṭaka jīva* has to be contemplated upon. The eight qualities of the *jīva* are contextual and are neither redundant nor synonymous. There is variety of choice in the qualities to be contemplated depending on the desire of the devotee (*upāsaka*). The author quotes time and again from the *Śrībhāṣya* and Vedāntadeśika's *Tattvaṭīkā* to prove his point that the *jīva* has to be contemplated only as *phalagaviṣayatārūpa*. i.e.. as pure (*amala*). He refutes the views of Naiyāyikas (vv. 36 and 39 - *pāṣāṇakalpa mokṣa*). According to one alternative, is *jñātṛtva* natural to the *jīva*, or is it

1 *Rahasyatrayasāra*, p. 153.

what one experiences like *prāṇa* (v. 38)? But this *jñātṛtva* is the result of *indriyas* (v. 43) and hence this alternative has to be rejected. In v. 39 the author states that *pūrvapakṣins* have only gained in unnecessarily creating an apparent discord between Rāmānuja and Vedāntadeśika (*muniyugakalaha*). So, the author categorically states in v. 42 :

तस्माच्छरीरभावाधिकरणफलितं निर्मलात्मस्वरूपे
ध्येयत्वं नो विशिष्यापहतदुरितत्वादिरूपे तथात्वम्।

In vv. 44,45 and 46 he again states that the interpretation of *anyayogavyavaccheda* ascribed to Rāmānuja is not correct. He states in v. 48 that those who meditate on the *pañcāgni-vidyā* also attain liberation even like those who perform any other *upāsanā* and become equal in all respects to the Lord with the exception of *lokavyāpāra*. He raises a pertinent question as to whether after attaining liberation, *upāsanā* comes to an end, but answers immediately that *upāsanā* continues even in the state of *mokṣa* in the form of *kaiṅkarya* to Bhagavān and Bhāgavatas. In the concluding verse, the author states that he has written this work in Śrīperumbūdūr having sipped (mastered) the essence of *Tatkratunyāyasāra* from his earlier ācāryas (culukitam).

The verse numbers given here are in accordance with the numbers given in the available manuscript. However the first three verses and the last two verses are not numbered in the manuscript. This work brings to light the

great veneration the author had for his ācāryas and his incapacity to bear any misinterpretations of their works or any divergence in their views.

Sthūṇāliṅgavinirṇayaḥ

This is a poetical piece in 16 verses justifying the usuage of the word *sthūṇā* in feminine gender by Vedāntadeśika in his *Daśāvatārastotra* (v.5).

या काचित् सहसा महासुरगृहस्थूणा पितामह्यभूत्

According to the critic, the word *sthūṇa* is only neuter in gender. But in the *Daśavatāravyākhyāna*,[1] two explanations are given:

(a) the word *sthūṇā* added to the single word *gṛha* becomes neuter by the *sūtra*, *gṛha-śaśābhyam klībe* (b) In the *sūtra* (I-22) *gṛha-śaśābhyam klībe* it is stated that though *gṛhasthūṇa* is *nityanapuṁsaka*, according to *śalākā striyām nityam* (I-34) the word *nithya* indicates optionality of the femine gender elsewhere. The relevant verse 10 reads as follows:[2]

यद्यत्र स्थूणया प्राग् गृहपदघटना स्यात् तदा क्लीबतैव
प्रागत्र स्वामिशब्दाम्बरपदघटितं प्राक्पुरं स्थूणयोगि।
पश्चात् स्वाम्यन्वये तु प्रकृतगृहपदार्थान्वयः पार्ष्टिकः स्यात्
स्थूणे साक्षाच्च पर्य्युन स भवति ततः सुष्ठु नः सर्वसिद्धिः॥

1 p. 21.
2 p. 130.

Concluding the work he states that he has written this in Tiruvahīndrapuram and pays his salutations to Vedāntadeśika –

जयति निगमान्तसूरिर्जयति दशश्रीशदिव्यजन्मनुतिः।
जयति रमानरमृगराडसुरगृहस्थूणयाऽऽप्तजननीकः॥

Nyāyasiddhāñjanakārikāvimarśanam

This work in 19 verses elucidates the meaning contained in the following *śloka* occuring in the *Jīvapariccheda* of Vedānta Deśika's *Nyāyasiddhāñjana*:

इयं केवललक्ष्मीशोपायत्वप्रत्ययात्मिका।
स्वहेतुत्वधियं रुन्धे किं पुनः सहकारिणाम्॥

In this track, the author criticises the interpretation offered to this *kārikā* by some, to the effect that surrender (*śaraṇāgati*) cannot be the bestower of all the desired fruits. Referring to Kūreśa's *Varadarājastava* (v. 88) he explains that the term *sva* in the *kārikā* should be taken to mean *prapannāya* and not *prapatteḥ*. The relevant verse in the Jīyar's *vimarśanam* reads as under:-

इत्थं चात्र स्वशब्दः परिमृशति पराधीनकर्तृप्रपन्नं
स्वाधीनश्रीशसाम्यासहमवधरणं तुल्यमेवोपरुन्ध्यात्।
वैधी न्यासात्मधीस्तु स्वयतनविरतिप्रापिकेत्यब्रुवन् यत्
तद्रूपस्वोपरोधं वदति रुधिरयं धीर्हि सङ्कल्पगर्भा॥

That *prapatti* cannot be the bestower of fruits is negated by the author in v. 19, wherein he states that the very act of surrender is not merely the surrender of body and soul, but the surrender of even one's knowledge that one is the agent of any action. So, this total self-effacement itself is capable of generating all fruits (*akhilaphala*).

The author concludes by stating that he has written this commentary in Śrīperumbūdūr and prays that Lord Nṛsiṁha be pleased with his work.

Ādeśamaṇi with commentary Kaustubha

This work in 38 *sragdharā* verses explains the formation of the word *ādeśa* found in the *Chāndogya* passage *uta tamādeśamaprākṣayaḥ*. Advaitins derive the word *ādeśa* by adding the suffix *ghañ* to the root *diś* in the sense of the object (*karmaṇi*) or the instrument (*karaṇa*). Thus according to them *ādeśaḥ* means that which is arrived at through instruction (*upadeśagamyaḥ*) or a sentence which conveys an instruction (*upadeśātmakam vākyam*).

But, Śrī Rāmānuja takes this word in the sense of 'one who commands' in the lines of the *Śruti* sentences - *antaḥ praviṣṭaḥ śāsthā janānām*[1] and *praśāsitāram saṛveṣām*[2]. It follows that the word *ādeśaḥ* according to Rāmānuja is derived from the root *diś* by adding the suffix *ghañ* in the sense

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1 *Kaivalya*. v. 10.

2 *Manu*. xii. 212.

of agent (*kartari*) by applying the rule, *padarujavisaspruṣo ghañ* etc., through *yogavibhāga*.

The present work *Ādeśamaṇi* along with its commentary *Kaustubha* was written to refute the derivations given to the word *ādeśa* by one Bhāradvāja Raṅgācārya in his work *Ādeśakaumudī*.[1] The author had earlier written a work *Gomālā* (which is not extant now) to refute the work *Ādeśakaumudī*. But, later because it was rather difficult to be comprehended by the less learned, the author took upon himself the task of writing the above work with its commentary. The author's scholarship and erudition are well reflected in this presentation. His mastery of Sanskrit grammar is also well marked. His interest to interpret the correct meanings intended by earlier ācāryas and his large-heartedness in writing in simpler language so as to cover larger audience is certainly to be commended.

Dāsadāsīsamarthani

This work is in 10 verses, justifying the expression *tvaddāsadāsīgaṇaḥ* found in v. 1 of Yāmuna's *Catuśślokī*. A few objections were raised by the critics to the effect that –

a) there should be *ekaśeṣa* compound according to Pāṇini's rule, *pumān striyā* (I-2-67) and

1 p. 29.

b) the usage should be *dāsīdāsam* according to *gaṇapāṭha* of the *sūtra* "*gavāśvaprabhṛtini*"(II.4-11). The author justifies the usuage of the compound *dāsadāsī* according to Pāṇinī's grammatical rules to the effect that *ekaśeṣa* is not compulsory. The relevant v. 6 is quoted below.

किञ्चात्रेत्ययथोदितत्वनियमव्यावर्त्यरूपं गणे
दासीदासपदेऽपि तुल्यनयतो वाच्यं हि तत्सिद्धये।
द्वन्द्वार्हं प्रतिलोमरूपमनुज्ञन्नप्याश्रयेद् अन्यथा
सङ्कोचो नियमस्य वाच्य इति तद् द्वन्द्वोऽत्र भाष्याशयः॥

The author refers to the *Śrībhāṣya* and *Catuśślokī Vyakhyāṇa* of Śrī Vedāntadeśika to prove his point. The author's mastery of Sanskrit grammar and his interest to convey the correct meaning intended by Rāmānuja and Yāmuna is perceptible. The author concludes by paying his obeisance to Yāmunayogivarya and Rāmānuja.

Makārarakṣā

This work is also in 10 verses, and explains the last syllable *ṁ* of the *praṇava* "*om*" which according to the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas refers to the individual soul (*jīva*). In the *Mūlamantrādhikāra* of *Śrīmad Rahasya-trayasāra*, Vedāntadeśika explains that the term "*ma*" is derived from the root "*man*" in the sense of "to know"- *mana jñāne*; *māṅ māne* (to measure) *masī pariṇāme* (to measure) *manu avabodhane* (to understand). In all these instances, *ṁ* alone remains after effecting the *ṭilopa*.

Now the objection is to the usage of *makāra* at the end of the word instead of *nakāra* by the grammatical rule *mo no dhātoḥ* (VIII.2. 64). The present track tries to answer the objections by resorting to the rule *uṇādayo bahulam* (III. 3. 1). The author states that this objection can be refuted even by resorting to the rule - *chandasi dṛṣṭānuvidhiḥ* and objection can be brushed aside by saying that it is *cāndhasaprayoga*. But the author's intention was to answer the objection in the traditional manner, grammatically, and hence the necessity of writing this piece. Once again, the author's proficiency in Sanskrit grammar is well-established.

Sthemadarpaṇaḥ

This work in prose is devoted to justify the usuage of the word *sthema* found in the opening verse of the *Śrībhāṣya* –

अखिलभुवनजन्मस्थेमभङ्गादिलीले

According to some critics *sthema* is ungrammatical. As a matter of fact, the word *sthema* was used by Vācaspatimiśra in his commentary *Vidhiviveka* on *Nyāyakaṇikā* thus – *bhuvanabhavanasthemadhvaṁsa* etc. Murāri in his *Anargharāghava* (VI. 36) also used it *niḥsthemāno daśānanakīrtayaḥ* in the sense of 'maintenance'.

But the author takes recourse to grammar, and justifies the usage of the word *sthema*

by

a) deriving it from the word *sthira*,

b) resorting to the word *sthāma* to which a suffix is added and

c) by adding the suffix *imanic* to the verb *sthā* under the rule *uṇādayo bahulam*.

The author concludes this treatise by paying his homage to Rāmānuja, Patañjali and Vedāntadeśika using alluring alliterative style.

पतञ्जलौ नित्यकृताञ्जलिः स्यामपाकृतस्वान्तवचाङ्गदोषि।
योगेन शब्देन च वैद्यकेन प्रेम्णा भुवि स्थेमकृति द्विजिह्वे॥

- - -

जयति निगमान्तसूरिर्यतिपतिवाणी सुधोरणी जयति।
जयति फणितिः पुराणी सप्रेमस्थेमधारिणी जयति॥

The concluding verse reads as under –

गोपालसूर्याशयशोभमानमेधापरिष्वङ्गविराजिताङ्घ्रिम्।
स्थेमाभिधादर्पणमर्पणेन जीयाच्चिरं श्रीनृहरेः पदाब्जे॥

In the appendix, the Svāmī's *vaibhava* containing biographical details and his composition is presented in 30 *ślokas*.

In the foregoing pages, a brief analysis has been attempted of the work of Pillaippākkam Svāmī, His Holiness the 37th pontiff of the Śrī Ahobila Maṭha. The depth of meaning enshrined in his works, his mastery over the Sanskrit grammar, his well-grounded erudition and scholarship and his devotion to *ācārya sūktis* are evident in his compositions.

The above study affords a glimpse into the philosopical and literary contributions of the Jīyars of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha to the cause of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. This selective study, it is hoped, will generate an interest into making an indepth study of the several individual works of the Jīyars.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters, the contribution of the Jīyars of Śrī Ahobila Maṭha has been studied from the view-points of philosophy, religion, literature and society. In fact all these constitute different facets of an integral whole. To the man of intellect, the philosophical interpretations and the commentaries on the *grantha-catuṣṭaya* afford food for thought; to the man of religion, the *arcā* worship of Śrī Mālola Nṛsiṁha, the *ḍolotsavas* of Lord Kṛṣṇa conducted at various individual residences and the daily religious schedule of the pontifical head, afford a veritable feast to the eyes and heart alike; to the man of letters, the "Mālola Vidvat Sadas" (scholarly assemblies) conducted annually, as also during special occasions, the arguments and counter-arguments put forth by erudite scholars and the Jīyar 's *samādhānams* are a treat to the ears and mind alike; and, to the society at large, the head of the Ahobila monastic order is not a total recluse, but very much a society-personage, involved in the rejuvenation of society. The Jīyar 's heart goes out to the suffering humanity and he is ever ready, like the Lord Himself, to alleviate their suffering by teaching them the easiest way to salvation viz., surrender (*saranāgati*) which requires the mammoth mental attitude viz., supreme confidence (*mahāviśvāsa*) in the salvic power of the Lord.

The Jīyar is also well aware of the current affairs of the state and the country as is evidenced by his grant of Rs. 50,000 to the Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister's Cyclone Relief Fund on November 20th 1996.[1] Further, the Jīyar has aslo asked all the branches of the Ahobila Maṭha in the country and also his disciples to provide succour to the suffering. This indeed is the very spirit of Śrīvaiṣṇavism namely, the inability to bear the suffering of others (*paraduḥkha asahiṣṇutva*).

By leading an exemplary life of detatched attachment, performing his daily and ordained duties, the pontifical head is setting standards to humanity and is showing the way in which to lead one's life according to one's *varṇa* and *āśrama*. By performing *pañcasaṁskāras* and accepting *bharanyāsa*, he is discharging his duty ordained by Lord Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha Himself and is thus, carrying on the six-century old tradition commencing from Śrī Ādī Vaṇ Śaṭhakopa, the first Jīyar.

The Jīyar lends a helping hand in the renovation of old and dilapidated temples (*punaruddhāraṇa*) seeing to it that there is no cessation of daily worship to the *arcā* idols in these temples. Donations in the form of valuable ornaments to the presiding deities in many temples are also made. To cite a recent instance, on the eve of the Jīyar 's 70th birthday (November 22, 1996), a diamond studded "Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha Padakam" costing about

1 To quote from the Indian daily "The Hindu" dated 21st November 1996. p.4. The Jīyar appealed that "every citizen of India, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, should come forward for the rescue of the people who are badly affected and have lost everything that belonged to them, including their kith and kin in the tragic devastation that shook the entire nation".

Rs. 2 lakhs was donated to the temple authorities at Tirumala to adorn the presiding deity, Lord Śrīnivāsa.

Further, the Maṭha plays an important role in the training of the temple priests (*arcakas*) and in educating them to be cultured and devoted in their service to the Lord. Vedic knowledge must be made available to the young and love for the highest moral virtues must be cultivated. From this view-point, the contribution of the Jīyar of Iñjimeḍu in setting up a Vedapāthaśālā at Madhurāntakam is very significant; and up to this day, it is fulfilling the purpose creditably. Students are enrolled at a very tender age and are imparted the study of *Vedas* and *Divyaprabaṅdham* alike. This is how the *Ubhayavedānta* tradition is carried down the centuries.

The Maṭha provides *sat-saṅga*, i.e. company of practising spiritual personalities who have perfected their lives in the light of the Divine inflow and persence. To be in their company is to undergo a transformation as it were. Thus, the Maṭha offers opportunities for the making of the saints through *sat-sampradāya* i.e. holy presence and worship and caters to the demands of all persons who are anxious to have the blessings of a spiritual life and opportunities of receiving the love of God in abundance.

As a matter of fact, the basic priniciples of one's religion should not be surrendered but should be restated, with a special reference to the needs of a more complex and changing social order. It is in this context that the Maṭha is

becoming more and more relevant to modern times. Religion is often misunderstood to be the outer practices, routine rituals and creeds unique to a particular culture. Even those who attempt to understand and follow their religion often get confused because they find it difficult to rationalise the beliefs and practices. Religious plurality is an undeniable fact and harmony should be the goal of all religions. Mankind today stands at the cross-roads of civilization, where on the one hand man is reaping the fruits of science and technology ushered in by the Industrial Revolution and on the other, he is searching for inner peace by tracing his cultural roots through religion. India has had a long cultural tradition and perhaps one of the earliest civilizations, the Vedic had integrated science and religion with success. In this mobile social order when there is inter-cultural rapport between continents, it is imperative that the enlightened pontifical heads initiate measures to educate the masses by creating awareness about the time-tested Vedic injunctious such as *satyam vada*, *dharmam cara* and so on, and focus on the grave consequences of neglecting these values which are essential for the very survival of mankind. The younger generation has to be taught that there is an inextricable connection between science and religion, though their methods are antithetical i.e. reason versus revelation.

All our Vedānta schools accept logic and their philosophies are substantiated and tempered by reason. It has now become imperative that the subtle concepts of Vedānta be communicated in a way relevant to the modern

generation. Our concept of *Sanātana Dharma* is scientific and has withstood the test of time. Though the need for religious harmony has been proclaimed by the enlightened in every generation, religious differences continue to create discord within society and between nations. To root out this problem and foster religious tolerence, fanaticism should be eradicated. The world would lose its vitality if one creed absorbed another. Variety is the spice of life and hence a rich harmony and not colourless uniformity is the ideal to be aimed for. Intellectualism has a tendency to separate the dissimilar and shut them up in different compartments, but , higher intuition takes note of the natural differences in all spheres and seeks to combine them into an integrated whole. S. Radhakrishnan[1] states "The half-religious and the irreligious fight about dogmas and not the truly religious.... and the more religious we grow, the more tolerant of diversity shall we become". Hence it is that a pontifical head is ideally suited to achieve this spirit of unity in diversity (each fulfilling its function and all directed by the force of the Divine to achieve the most exquisite harmony). It is indeed by performing this duty that a *Maṭhādhipati* can fulfill the heartfelt desire of Vedāntadeśika –

परस्परहितैषिणां परिसरेषु मां वर्तय।[2]

"Let me reside in the vicinity of those who desire mutual welfare".

1 *Hindu View of Life*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1960, p. 44.
2 *Abhītistava*, v. 28.

Any research is not an end in itself. Infact it should be a beginning and should open up new *vistas* for further research and study. In this aspect, the present study, it is hoped, can encourage comparative study of the other Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṭhas, a study of the contribution of Pillaippākkam Jīyar (37th Pontiff) to Śrīvaiṣṇavism and the preparation of a Critical Edition of Śrī Nārāyaṇa Muni's *Rahasyatrayajīvātu*. Efforts should also be made by aspiring young scholars to trace some of the valuable works of the Pontiffs which are mere names to us.

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